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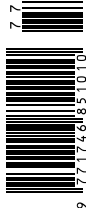
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...the Grey Ghost



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JANUARY/
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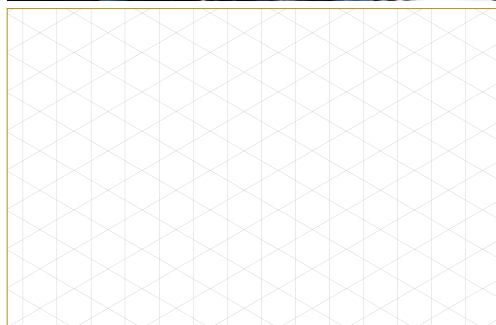
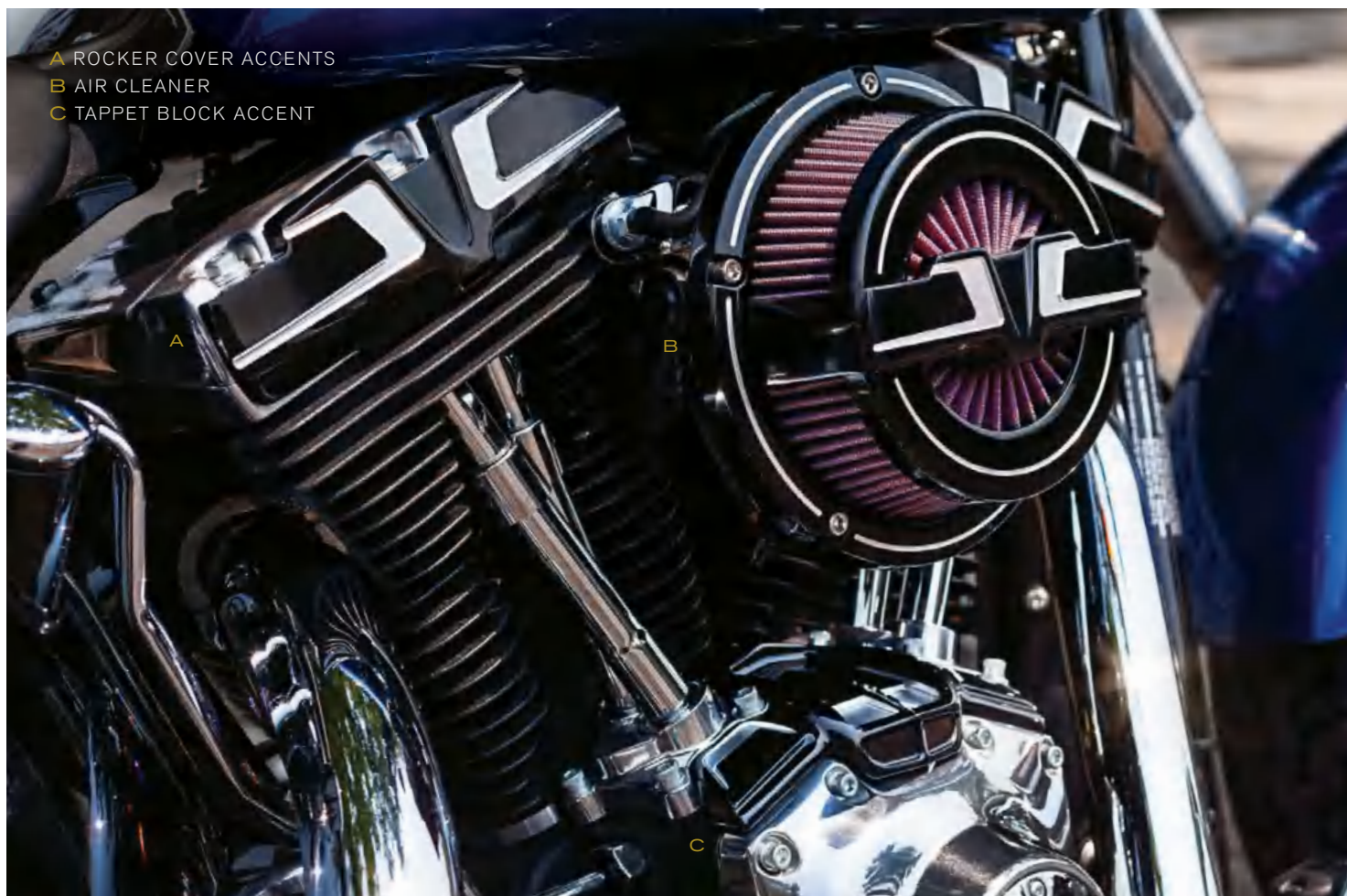
TRIPPING OUT
...at the Trip Out



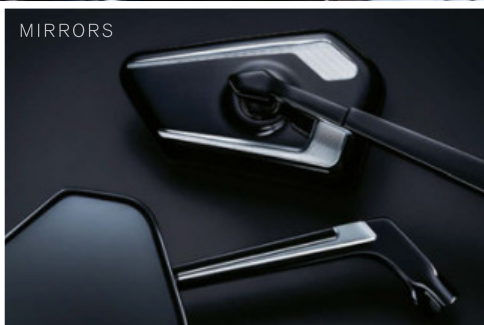
BREAKING OUT ...the Breakout!

THE TRIP OUT | RIDERS CLUB INTERNATIONAL AT THE POKER RUN | BRIGHTONA | SHIPLEY

- A ROCKER COVER ACCENTS
- B AIR CLEANER
- C TAPPET BLOCK ACCENT



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Editor's Letter

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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2016
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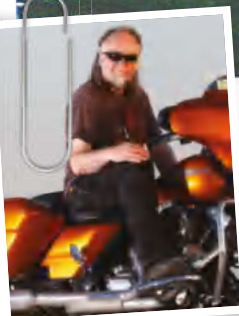
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Flash, bang, wallop, what a stitch-up!

Innocent until proven guilty – aka the presumption of innocence – is an interesting legal concept, even one enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but it is one that can be bypassed by a first class stamp.

At some point in recent history a legal precedent determined that once a Notice of Intended Prosecution has been put into first class post to the recipient's last known address – its posting self-certified by the sender – it can be considered to have been served.

There is no requirement to prove that it arrived: it can be served to an address that the recipient is known to have left, be returned to the court marked 'undelivered', and even if the address no longer physically exists, it is legally considered to have been served. The term is the "Irrebuttable Presumption of Service".

If you or I were to send something important there are inexpensive ways of requiring a recipient's signature, proving receipt: a qualified contact.

It's not perfect for private houses because it is possible that there's nobody at home to sign for it, and it could sit on the shelf unsigned for at the post office, but the address has specifically been served with something – a collection card if not the actual letter itself – which makes it far harder for the recipient to stand up in court later and, having acknowledged their name and address, say that they didn't receive the timed and dated collection card with the postman's signature, or the signed-for letter with their own ... and it does presuppose that the letter is in the right letter box.

This currently has resonance for me because having triggered a speed camera on the A6 last July, and despite the registered keeper identifying

me as the rider – having confirmed that I was – they then asked me who the rider was. I was waiting for it, figured I'd had a good run since my last ticket in 1991, and was looking forward to seeing the photograph – which I eventually found out could have been anyone riding anything. Except it didn't arrive. I didn't receive the reminder either, and thought it must have been dropped as being too marginal.

I was wrong.

Instead I was charged with failing to give information relating to the driver/rider of a vehicle, was found guilty in my absence – and my ignorance (which is no defence) – and the first I knew of it was when I tried to hire a van using the new driving licence rules and learned that I had six points, an unpaid fine and that my licence had been revoked.

A statutory declaration cleared the points, reinstated my licence and restrained a debt collector that had just been appointed, and I went back to court to answer the original charges: not speeding, because too much time had elapsed, but failing to identify the rider, for which there was quite literally no defence. The papers had been popped into the post and that was that! To continue pleading not guilty would have substantially increased the Prosecution's costs, and the only saving grace is that the charges had been brought before 14 April 2015 because anything later would have incurred an additional £540 Criminal Court Charge.

I'm sorely tempted to ring Warwickshire Police – I got flashed on the same bike the very next weekend – to make sure they're not awaiting any correspondence from me ...

Be careful out there.



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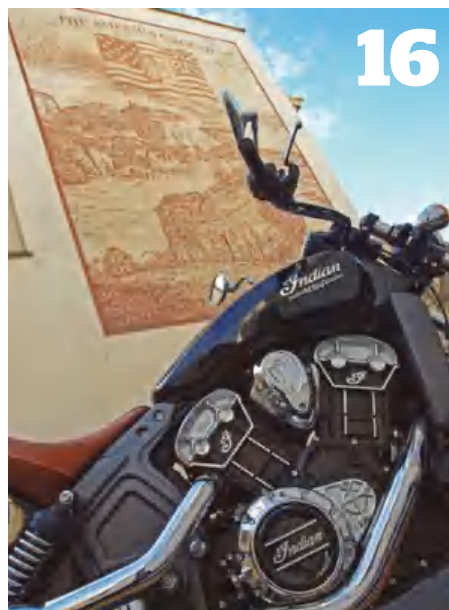
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NEWS



KING OF CUSTOM II

As part of the relaunch of Dark Custom across the European, Middle East and Africa dealerships, Harley are reprising their Battle of the Kings competition in 2016, with one significant difference.

As opposed to last year when UK and Ireland dealers got the Forty-Eight to play with while the rest of Europe modified the new 750 Street, this time it's a level playing field and everyone gets a ... go on, have a guess?

The recently relaunched XL883 Iron, and its best looking incarnation yet!

With more than 150 dealers across Europe alone, it will be a hard fought competition, and

you only need to look through last year's entries for a bike in its first year of production to see that there will be an interesting and diverse range of entries.



The competition will be formed of two parts, with a national championship pronouncing one Custom King per country – based on a public vote held between March and April 2016, followed by a jury round – and then a head-to-head between them to be held at the Wheels and Waves event in Biarritz, France, in June 2016!

Once again, dealers will have their budgets capped, and must be able to reproduce their build at that price to demonstrate that personalised Dark Customs are affordable, and full details can be found at a dedicated website.

Let battle commence!

h-d.com/customkings



SUB £9K 1,000CC SCOUT 60 ANNOUNCED

Indian will really ruffle some feathers with this entry-level 60 cubic inch middleweight that is aimed squarely at Harley's Sportster, and which has hopefully got enough to differentiate it from its bigger, more powerful brother.

There are some important differences between this and its 1133cc sibling, the most important of which being that it has been reduced to 78hp from the regular model's 100hp so can be reduced further to meet A2 specifications. That also brings the torque figure down from 72.2ftlbs (97.7Nm) to 65ftlbs (88.8Nm) – considerably less than the 1200 Sportster – and it will be interesting to see how it rides, because it does have a completely different power characteristic. The size and power reduction is a result of reducing the bore to 93mm – 6mm smaller – while retaining the 73.6mm crank.

It's too early to tell yet whether it's only a change in the barrel and piston size, but as the Scouts liner's sleeve is part of the barrel it would be an easy upgrade if it was.

The next most important difference – because it's the one that will protect the bigger model – is that it has a 5-speed gearbox. A weirdness in the specs currently lists the Scout 60's overall ratio in fifth as 1.036:1, which is the same as the internal gearbox ratio of the 1133cc Scout's sixth, so top gear might be the same, assuming it can pull it.



Visually, there are quite a few changes if you know where to look: the titanium colour of the Scout frame has been switched to a simpler black, and the tan leather seat is now black, and a failure to mention that it is made of leather suggests it might not be. The headlamp is blacked out, too, as are the handlebars, engine side covers, the rocker boxes and the rear shocks' springs. And having shaved the spokes and rims of the 2016 Scout, the Scout 60 retains the all-black finish of the 2015 model.

And it comes in Pearl White as well as Thunder Black and Indian Motorcycle Red.

The biggest deal of the lot, however, is that its arrival at £8,999 means that it undercuts the 2016 Vegas 8-Ball by £500 ... and that 999cc is actually a 61-cubic inches, but I guess they're leaving that to Harley and posterity.

With the floating "1920 Solo Saddle" already available in black to match it, as well as laced wheels and mini apes, it even comes with some interesting options, and should fly out the door.

www.indianmotorcycle.co.uk



EBR STALLS

My sincerest hope is that there will be a fourth and final episode in the everyday story of motorcycle manufacturing folk that is Erik Buell Racing, because word has reached us that the deal to take over EBR has hit difficulties.

The Milwaukee Sentinel Journal reports that it will be going back to a court auction in

December because the highest bidder, Bruce Belfer's, 'Right to Close' expired on the 30th September, a week before Hero's 'Right to Claim Inventory' expired, effectively meaning that Belfer could have purchased items that Hero could then have claimed ownership of, through a separate deal done with the court for Buell's consulting business.

It is Belfer's intention to bid with a view to restarting production, but he's now got to win a second auction and successfully close the sale. Apparently the only other bidders at the last auction were liquidators, but Buell has teased that other interested buyers hadn't been ready on the last auction date.

erikbuellracing.com



VICTORY CONCEPT BIKE PAVING THE WAY FOR NEXT GENERATION

The first pre-production engine of a new line at Victory has been wrapped up in a concept put together by Swiss custom builder, drag racer and Victory dealer Urs Erbacher: the “Ignition Concept”.

The motor has been seen before in the Project 156 hill climber built by Roland Sands to take on Pikes Peak, and much of the rolling chassis bears an uncanny resemblance to the US Patent Office drawings of a couple of years ago, but the final elements, including the suspension package and performance modifications, were entrusted to Erbacher.

Based round a 1200cc 60-degree, liquid-cooled 4-valve V-twin, the Ignition Concept will take Victory in a sportier direction, as Polaris indicated would be the case when they resurrected Indian. It doesn't take an engineering genius to spot the similarities between the Ignition Concept's motor and the

Indian Scout, although with a very different state of tune and with some substantial differences – technically as well as visually – it is anticipated that the different incarnations of what is increasingly called the middleweight engine will stand on their own merit.

Polaris will be keen to put clear blue water between their two motorcycle brands but the reception that the Scout motor has received can only be reassuring to those who have been waiting for a sportier Victory.

The ignition Concept – assuming that the chassis is more Polaris than Erbacher, and being cast aluminium that is a safe bet – will be offering suspension geometry that is more pragmatic than the stylised Scout's, which will make life easier for the rear springs, and the range of alternative aftermarket shocks much wider. It also has a marginally tighter rake at 28° to quicken up an already lively frame.



Its twin discs and Brembo M4 Monobloc calipers, piggyback Ohlins shocks, fully adjustable 50mm Marzocchi USD forks and a compact lobster-back exhaust with an Akropovic muffler are more likely to represent a wishlist than a final specification, but you can live in hope. The seventeen-inch wheels are a no-brainer though, for ready availability of sportier rubber.

More details of the engine are promised in mid-December, and it will be interesting to see what sort of power they will be offering from it: for now the only clue is “Class Dominating Power and Performance”.

Victorymotorcycles.com/en-us/ignition



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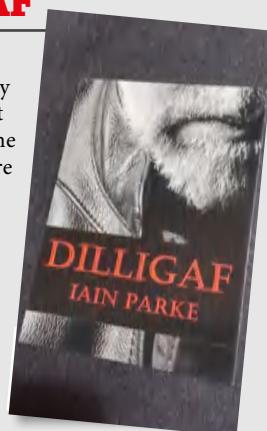
DILLIGAF

Landing on my doormat this very morning, I'm not going to have time to review it before we go to press, but as Christmas is approaching it's worth mentioning to those who have been following the series that the last – or maybe just the latest – chapter of the Brethren MC series is now in print from the prolific Mr Parke.

This trilogy in six parts has been a roller coaster over the last six years and there's no reason to suspect this will be any different.

I'll let you know in the new year.

ISBN 978-0-9930261-0-2
bad-press.co.uk



HOT STUFF



Looking for something less predictable as a heat shield on your exhausts? How about leather?

It's got a 14 gauge steel base so it will be robust enough, and will fit most bikes with 1 3/4 and 2-inch exhausts. They are available in plain black or an antique brown leather, with circular cut-outs or solid, and in three lengths.

CCE 603250/51/52 circle cut-out, black leather 6/9/12-inches

CCE 603253/54/55 solid, black leather, 6/9/12-inches

CCE 603256/57/58 circle cut-out, antique brown leather 6/9/12-inches

CCE 603259/60/61 solid, antique brown leather, 6/9/12-inches

Priced according to type, length and colour



custom-chrome-europe.com

AMERICAN BEAUTIES



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Each model in the Indian Motorcycle® 2015 model line up is conceived with a careful nod to the past and a firm focus on the open road ahead. Indian Motorcycle® now presents history making model additions like the legendary Scout™ and the commanding Roadmaster®.

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* Promotional warranty valid for all 2015 Indian® motorcycles sold in Europe. Specific conditions apply. Please see your dealer for details.

INDIANMOTORCYCLE.CO.UK

Accessorised bikes shown. Some items not available in all countries. Please ask your dealer about availability.





LACES FOR BIG BOOTS

Mike Chadwick of Custom Cruisers is bringing in American-built Magnum laced wheels with supersized fat spokes, and carries a comprehensive range of both black powder-coated steel and chrome plated in stock, which are suitable for Harley-Davidson and can be easily adapted for Victory motorcycles.

Whether you're looking for a 26x3½ for the front of a big-wheeled bagger, or a fat 18x10½ rear for a 300-section tyre – or both – if he hasn't got them he can get them quickly, and that goes for all the common sizes as well as the 23-inch and 26-inch front.

Matching discs are available too, and pulleys to take a 20mm, 1-inch, 11/8, 1¼ and 1½-inch belts.

Prices range from £499 for a regular 16x3½ up to £699 for the whopping 18x10½.

Ring 01773 835666 for more details.

customcruisers.com



BELL BULLITT



As sure as night follows day, we were always going to see retro full-face helmets following on from the old school jets, and it's great to see a company like Bell dusting off their own design – their Star helmet – to offer it anew to another generation looking to appropriate that style.

It isn't quite a carbon copy – regulations have changed – so it now uses the latest technology but still has the vintage style: the best of both worlds.

So, you've got a fibreglass shell in one of

three sizes, covering XS to XXL, a dual density expanded polystyrene lined with a partly removable, washable textile liner and trimmed with an anti-bacterial leather. It features five air inlets to keep your head cool, each behind wire mesh, and a single exhaust, and is secured by a classic Double-D buckle.

A range of visors is available – including the inevitable bubble – and it meets ECE 22.05 and DOT certification and comes with a five-year warranty and a soft bag.

wwag.com



DAVIDA FACEMASKS

Wear a jet helmet and you know that one day you're going to get caught in a monsoon, in which case you will either wish you'd got a beard, or a decent facemask.

Champions of the open face, Davida, know this and have been making high quality facemasks for years. Made from carefully shaped and stitched soft leather with a super-soft laminated liner, they offer a closely tailored fit with comfort and warmth, and they now also come in white and nut brown leather as well as the original black and nappa brown.

The 'Davida Universal' is secured by an elastic strap and can be used with any



helmet, while a second mounts on the pop studs on a Davida Classic helmet.

All Davida facemasks carry a discreet Davida label so you know you're buying the real thing and not an imitation.

davida.co.uk

24074: Universal Leather Face Mask, white

24075: Universal Leather Face mask, nut brown, £29.58 +vat

60074: Classic Helmet Leather Face Mask, white

60065: Classic Helmet Leather Face mask, nut brown, £29.58 +vat



Speed Merchant Skid Plates

Remember when even an FL had a heavyweight sump guard? Well, they did used to do some strange cross-country trials on them. Then we got streamlined chin spoilers to keep things tidy, and now we've gone full circle, except these are 2.3mm aluminium and they don't do them for FLs.

They come in a brushed or dull black powdercoat finish with stainless steel fittings.
 WW 88-736 Dyna 1991-2005, brushed
 WW 88-736 Dyna 1991-2005, brushed
 WW 88-737 Dyna 1991-2005, black
 WW 88-738 Dyna 2006-on, brushed
 WW 88-739 Dyna 2006-on, black
 WW 88-743 FXR 1982-1994 (CVO 1999/2000), brushed
 WW 88-760 FXR 1982-1994 (CVO 1999/2000), black
 WW 88-761 XL 2004-on, brushed
 WW 88-772 XL 2004-on, black

wwag.com

Laydown Headlamps

Okay, so they're technically V-Rod headlamps for models without the bikini fairing, but the principle is the same as for laydown taillights and the rationale is better: a streamlined headlamp that is more deflector than obstacle to the wind.

It's obviously e-marked and takes a parking light as well as dip and main beam – which are H11 and H9 halogens, respectively. It comes complete with its housing, mounting bolts for a sidemount, wiring loom and connectors.

Zod 161507: V-Rod Headlight Unit €207
 zodiac.nl



SIT!

Best known for cool and inexpensive chopper bits and pieces, Biltwell have brought out a range of simple solo saddles for 06-15 Dynas in a couple of style and three options each. The Champion is a generously padded seat with a rounded profile, and comes with a horizontal or vertical tuck 'n roll cover in black vinyl, or as just the ABS base moulded, closed cell polyurethane foam for you to get covered to suit.



CCE 889203: Champion, pan with foam
 CCE 889204: Champion, with vertical tuck
 CCE 889205: Champion, with horizontal tuck
 CCE 889197: Challenger, with vertical tuck
 CCE 889198: Challenger, smooth
 CCE 655873: Challenger, pan with foam



If you're looking for something a little more angular, the Challenger is a barebones seat with a decent bumpstop preventing you from sliding backwards, but no spare padding anywhere else. This comes with either a vertical tuck 'n roll or a plain finish cover, or the seat pan and foam again, for your custom cover.

All come with a chrome-plated tail bracket that mounts on the original fixing point, and those of most aftermarket mudguards.

customchromeurope.com

PBI Transmission Sprockets



Remember chains and sprockets? Owners of Pre-Evo Harleys will, and they will be pleased to hear that American manufacturer, PBI, who have been manufacturing high quality sprockets since the 1970s are still making a range of them for 530 chain – 5/8 x 3/8-inch.

I don't propose to list them all – go and visit your local W&W dealer or W&W's website to see the application table for that.

Suffice to say that it's a range of electroless nickel-plated chrome-moly steel transmission

sprockets for 4-speed big twins from 1936 to '79 (2-stud) and 1980-'85 (3-stud), 4-cam models from 1954 to early '79, and late 1979 to early '84 (2-stud, different bosses), late 1984-'90 (3-stud) and 1991/'92 (large centre) in a range of sizes from 21 to 26 teeth depending on the application.

They are matched to five types of rear wheel sprockets machined from tempered aluminium – stronger and lighter than steel: 1963-'85 Big Twin and 1979-'81 XL with a 6mm offset from 2024 aluminium in a polished or silver satin finish, 1982-'85 FXR models with a 12mm offset in polished 7075 only, and 1982-'92 / universal with no offset in 7075 in a polished or silver satin finish. They are in sizes ranging from 40 to 60 teeth, depending on application.

wwag.com

Küryakyn Xkürsion XW5.5 Roller Bag

It wasn't so many years ago that roller bags were the domain of aircrews, gliding silently along the marble floors of airports. Not any more: why carry when you can drag? Certainly true if you're booking into a hotel, in which case the good-looking if huge Xkürsion sissy-bar bag is a fitting accompaniment.

Measuring nearly 20-inches wide, 13-inches deep and a whopping 22-inches high, we're not talking about a modest tote bag here, but then this should cover anything from a professional presentation to a weekend away.

It features a removable divider that gives the option of one massive packing space or individual upper and lower compartments, each with their own access, plus 'thermo-formed' side compartments for extra cargo and side pockets for smaller items. Interior padded pockets will keep electronics safe, and come in multiple sizes suitable for anything

from a phone to a 17-inch laptop, and – of course – there is a handle stowed in the back.

Like all bags in the family, the XW5.5 is made from weather-resistant 1200 denier Maxtura to withstand the harshest environments.

Küruakyn Xkürsion XW5.5 Roller Bag
 £313.00

www.kuryakyn.com
 distributed in Europe by mageurope.com



Kustom-Tech has Huge Leverage at Custom Chrome

When you add up all of the permutations, the range of levers that K-Tech produce is impressive; and if the elegant style of Kustom Tech's Classic range floats your boat you will be sure of finding the right combination for your application, in terms of operation and finish.

Spare levers are available for everything, as are master cylinder service kits for both 12mm and 14mm hydraulic master cylinders.

And there's a single cable throttle twistgrip to match, because anything else wouldn't look right.

So from the top, here's the breakdown:

'Classic' wire clutch lever assembly

CCE 655862: polished

CCE 655863: satin

CCE 655864: raw

CCE 888975: black

'Classic' wire brake lever assembly

CCE 655865: polished

CCE 655866: satin

CCE 655867: raw

CCE 888976: black

'Classic' clutch master cylinder

CCE 655835: 14mm bore, polished

CCE 655836: 14mm bore, satin

CCE 655837: 14mm bore, raw

CCE 888970: 14mm, black

'Classic' hydraulic brake lever assembly

CCE 655851: 12mm polished

CCE 655852: 12mm satin

CCE 655853: 12mm raw

CCE 655854: 14mm polished

CCE 655855: 14mm satin

Kustom Tech Deluxe External Throttle Housing

CCE 653063: polished

CCE 653064: satin

CCE 653065: raw

CCE 888961: black finish



custom-chrome-europe.com

Clamp Tidies

The switchgear side of Harley's current generation lever perches isn't the prettiest of things: it doesn't need to be because the switchgear masks it, but if you remove the switchgear ...

This ridiculously simple billet aluminium 'Switch Housings Delete' is the answer to your ugly lever perch cares, sliding down the handlebar, abutting the bracket and held in place with a grub screw, and that unfinished and unlovely clamp is forgotten.

WW 27-959: left side (clutch) black powdercoat

WW 27-963: left side (clutch) polished

WW 27-958: right side (brake) black powdercoat

WW 27-959: right side (right) black powdercoat



wwag.com



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WW 21-010: Black/White

WW 21-024: Black/Orange

WW 21-025: Red/Dark Red

WW 21-026: Dark Blue/Grey

wwag.com

VG Repro Frames

Yes, of course you want to find an old Knuck under a tarpaulin in a barn somewhere – an oiled tarp and a dry barn, obviously – but even if you find one, there are fewer flying pigs offering freighting services these days. But never mind, you can always buy a high quality repro frame and build one ... or a Pan.

Okay, so you've still got to find a motor and transmission, although you can always buy new there, too: it won't be the real thing, but it will be a lot closer than classic covers on a Twin Cam and you'll get less grief if you take a gas-axe to it than if it were an original paint survivor. And if you do it right you'll potentially have the best of both worlds, and possibly for less than an original. Just need a log book.

W&W 15-960: straightleg 1941-'45 Knucklehead/UL, 29° rake

W&W 15-961: straightleg 1946 Knucklehead/UL Bullneck, 30° rake

W&W 15-962: wishbone 1948 Panhead, 30° rake

W&W 15-963: wishbone 1949-'54 Panhead, 30° rake

W&W 15-964: straightleg 1955-'57 Panhead, 30° rake, €2,970.00

wwag.com



These Dutch-built VG frames can be used as stock replacements or the basis for a bike from scratch, giving you the same starting point as an original chassis. The dimensions and castings closely follow the originals, with markings identical to the factory frame, period correct toolbox mounts and even a push-in bush for the brake shaft pivot.

There is no mention of the seat tube being machined to take the sprung seat post so I'd check, if that is important to you.

MOUNTING PROBLEMS

We all know what a difference the Isoplanar engine mounts make on a Dyna, but what we often forget is that they serve a secondary purpose.

Because the drivetrain integrity requires the swing-arm to pivot on the back of the gearbox, the alignment of the engine mounts directly affects the wheel alignment – which accounts for why some bikes are happier on right hand bends and others on lefts. Yes, seriously.

It's not news, but Custom Cycle Engineering's new indexed front motor mount is.

CCE 889116: Dyna Front Engine Bracket

CCE 889117: Dyna Top Stabilizer Link

The main motor mounting holes are slotted, allowing a small amount of slew, and there is an index marked on the top, picking out the centre with four increments either side.

Grub screws tapped into the side of the mount allow you to precisely move the slackened bracket left and right relative to the motor, and lock it in place while the main mounting bolts are fastened. Simple.

And while we're here, they do an improved, rubber-isolated Top Stabilizer Link, which replaces the stock link with its metal-on-metal interface, reducing high speed vibration

customchromeurope.com



Who are you calling sissy?

Sissy bars are back with a vengeance: the answer to the universal question "where am I going to fit all that crap when I go camping on my Sportster?"

Well, I say Sportster, but only because that's what this Burly Sissy Bar has been designed for ... and they have the least amount of available space to strap things to.

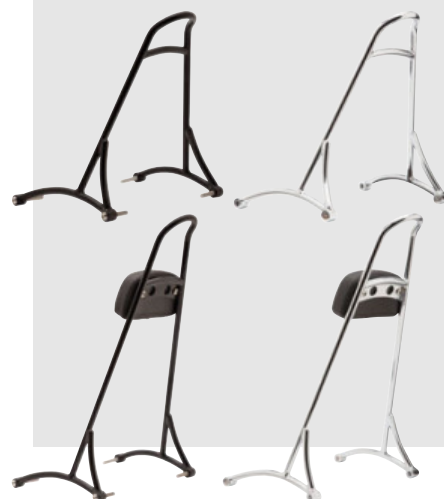
And when you're not camping?

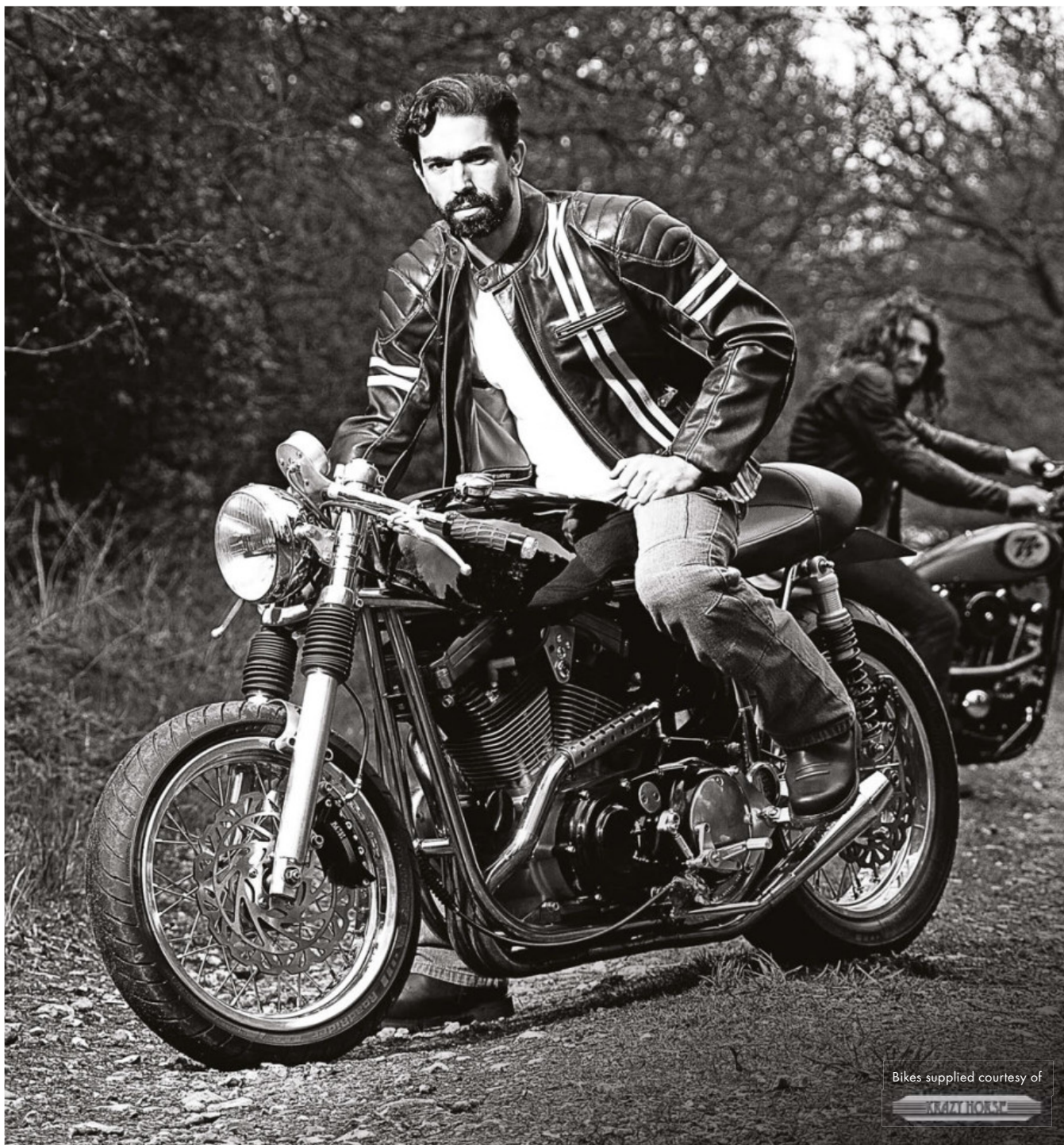
That's when – apparently – you call it a chick stick. Who knew?

Welded in the US of A, it comes in two heights – the taller of which has a pad – and in black or chrome. And it fits all 2004-on Sportsters, mounting to the outside of the struts.

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Zod 744859 Short chrome without pad
Zod 744852 Tall black with pad
Zod 755858 Tall chrome with pad

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INDIAN SCOUT

I can now tell you that when the covers went back on the Indian Scout at last year's Sturgis event, I was horrified. A water-cooled DOHC Indian? Seriously?

Words & Photography: Andy Hornsby



Everything that had been said the previous year at the launch of the Chief, relating to Indian being Polaris' heritage brand and leaving Victory free to move forward as a truly new American motorcycle was in tatters. Or so it seemed to this reactionary fundamentalist.

I was wrong, of course, but it took me a while to come to terms with just how wrong, and why, and I reconciled myself that it hadn't been built for me. It was a new style of bike designed to attract new riders who either hadn't previously considered an American motorcycle, or who hadn't taken one seriously.

The break with traditional American engineering was justified by Indian being an innovative company in its day – referring more to the time when they introduced front and rear suspension (1913), an electric start (1914), and semi-unit construction with a helical-cut gear driven primary (1920) rather than staying

true to flatheads when the rest of the world was adopting OHV motors. But the new bike had to be worthy of the name, a task entrusted to Rich Christoph, a former Polaris intern who Polaris' head of industrial design, Greg Brew, had spent years tempting back from Harley-Davidson where he'd been responsible for the Forty-Eight and Seventy-Two.

Styling-wise, Christoph chose to steer clear of the art deco lines of the fully-skirted mudguards, and which were as divisive in 1940 as they have been at any time since – factory rider Max Bubeck is quoted as saying that they signalled a time when “Indian stopped making motorcycles and started making Harleys”. Instead, he took his inspiration from the flat tank era that established the legend of CB Franklin's classic Scout, because despite its success as a production bike it achieved immortality on the Wall of Death, and original Scouts from the 1920s still perform on walls across the world.

Franklin's first Scout came with a rigid frame, its dual top frame rails sandwiching a flat-sided fuel tank, and it set new standards for performance and reliability combined with easy handling, and while Christoph stopped short of running the second frame rail over the top of the tank and fitting leaf-spring forks, Franklin's influence is clear.

The shape of the new frame owes everything to its acutely-angled shock absorbers, which perfectly continue the line of the implied seat stays of a rigid frame, and they're great for drawing out the tap room experts, keen to impart their wisdom. Rest assured they do work at such an angle: they just need bloody stiff springs because the leverage exerted is phenomenal. They are better than your average over-sprung, under-damped oem shocks, but don't get your hopes up too high.

With three inches of travel at the wheel spindle corresponding to about an inch of



K-Tech is a British suspension company with a justified reputation for racing suspension, and having developed a pair of gas shocks for the Scout – and knowing that Crazy Horse's demonstrator in Bury St Edmunds was running a pair – I headed east.

It was well worth the journey because it put a few things into context, mainly that the brutal leverage of the rear suspension geometry works beautifully with a decent shock absorber. While the oem shocks are safely on the right side of adequate, the difference between them and the K-Tech Bullets turned a great motorcycle into a stunning one, with a significantly smoother, more pliant ride with no hint of bottoming-out – or topping – regardless of what I asked of them.

That they look like a strut is only to their advantage and they could have been made for the job.

Returning to the stock bike, it felt like a different bike: crude, but at least I knew it was redeemable.

The Crazy Horse demonstrator also gave us the chance to see the stage-one pipes and the accessory pillion seat with accompanying footrests in situ, and it's good to see that they don't upset the bike's lean and hungry style ... at least they don't until you fit a clumsy-looking accessory backrest and rack that is at odds with everything about the Scout. I can only describe them as functional, but I still welcome them as they will encourage accessory manufacturers to provide a better-looking alternative, and variety is good for sales.

compression at the shocks, it's a big ask of their tightly pitched springs and it looks as though they could get coil-bound in extreme conditions: they can – they did – but possibly only because I didn't have the special tools needed to adjust them.

Preload is adjusted via a non-indexed collar and lock nut hidden beneath the branded rubber cap at the top of the spring, and the shock measured between the centres of its mounting bolts should be 282mm when laden. When I applied my dressed-for-riding 17½ stone to the saddle it was reduced to 278mm, which might not sound like much but could make all the difference. Even then I only bottomed-out when riding in a spirited fashion on sweeping B-roads.

Sadly the softer than desirable front forks aren't adjustable, but experimentation with progressively wound fork springs and heavier weight oil to tighten up the damping should fix that.

The good news – no, the excellent news – is that aftermarket shocks are available, one of which being K-Tech's air shock, the Bullet, which looks like a rigid strut and utterly transforms the ride: see box out.

Using the balanced unit-construction motor as a stressed member has made the frame impressively taut, and its 29-degree rake offers livelier handling than you might expect from a fat-tired cruiser.

The Taiwanese-made, Indian-branded, Kenda tyres have come in for some criticism in the wet and I have had them break away once, but that was on a damp road and accelerating hard to merge with traffic might have had something to do with it: the bike fishtailed nicely but stepped right back into line when I rolled the throttle off. They certainly haven't been short of grip in the dry, when a liberal handful of throttle will have the front wheel skipping the tarmac without any hint of the rear breaking free, so I personally wouldn't be in a

hurry to switch them just for the sake of it.

If you are more demanding of your rubber, the tyres are common enough sizes – 130/90-16 on the front and 150/80-16 on the rear – so you can take your pick from any manufacturer, and could even switch to whitewalls or raised white letters if you wanted to dramatically change the look.

They are wrapped round some good looking cast wheels – fifteen spokes arranged as five groups of three – which are complemented by a matching final drive pulley, beneath a pair of steel mudguards that seem to be having an identity crisis, particularly the front which looks like it's been put on the wrong way round ... but then I'm an old reactionary. Even though they are embracing a new styling metaphor, they are obviously trying to retain some of the marque's original styling cues, and I think there's still some work to do.

The frame is constructed from a number of sandcast aluminium sections, like the Chief's, ➔



but there all similarity ends. Rather than hiding its technology behind plastic covers, the 'Titanium' hue of the Scout's painted component parts have been designed to be seen, tying-in with the style of the engine, and it's only a matter of time before someone machines, polishes or engraves those castings to within an inch of their lives.

Rather than hanging a radiator on the front of the chassis, Indian have framed it within the front 'wishbone', for want of a better word, making it unobtrusive when viewed in profile without shamefacedly hiding it away for fear of upsetting traditionalists: it would be pointless to do so as the short-stroke 1133cc motor couldn't be anything but water-cooled, and you either accept it or you don't.

Similarly, there has been no cynical attempt to disguise the engine technology with cosmetic fins, Christoph making a feature of it with vertical lines alluding to the track of the bore beneath, topped by a stylised capital 'I', to make sure that it is instantly identifiable as an Indian. In reality, most of what sticks up above the crankcases are the DOHC cylinder heads: the visible extent of the barrels themselves measure just 50mm from base to head gasket because most of the bore is a spigot buried deep in the crankcases.

There's nothing massively radical about the engine design, other than that it has been put into a motorcycle bearing an Indian logo, but it feels well put together and its 99x73.6mm dimensions deliver useable torque and excellent power out of the box.

Like the Chief, it has a semi-dry sump – which is to say the oil is held in the crankcase, eliminating the external oil lines of a dry sump without having to accommodate the extra height of a wet one, keeping the overall height of the motor, which helps to keep the centre of gravity low. It also has a one-piece forged crankshaft, in phase with a direct drive balance shaft, and features side-by-side conrods on plain main bearings. The valve train is obviously quite different, but is quite conventional, with tappet adjustment by bucket and shim – which is reckoned to be good for 20,000 miles before inspection – and the cams are driven by a

hydraulically-tensioned silent chain.

Beneath all this, the 6-speed transmission has straight-cut, sliding mesh gears, and a gear-driven primary. Like on the Chief, the clutch is driven directly off the crank, spinning it and the gearbox input shaft backwards, which is corrected again when drive is transferred to the output shaft; but unlike its big brother, the Scout's clutch is mounted on the right-hand side of the motor, allowing the belt final drive to exit on the left. Much has been made of the benefits of constant mesh boxes with helical-cut gears in recent times, but this is as smooth a gearbox as I've known and can be used silently – and clutchlessly – when shifting up and down the box. My only criticism is that it's easy to get lost among its ratios unless you literally count the changes: you'll certainly struggle to get a sense of engine speed based on the exhaust note, because those twin mufflers let very little out.

Fuel for the closed-loop fuel injection is supplied by a single 60mm downdraft throttle body that draws from an airbox positioned between the twin top frame rails, and includes a chamber in the front frame member. It's a neat system but it takes a chunk out of the underside of the fuel tank, and therefore its capacity, which is the same 12.5 litres as the Sportster Iron's peanut tank, despite the shell looking more like the 17-litre tanks fitted to Sportster customs.

This motor is a little schizophrenic in its power delivery with two distinct ways of laying it down, depending on how the mood takes you.

While it hasn't got the same torque as a classic long stroke OHV motor, it will rumble along well enough, short shifting and making good progress. The only difference is that the motor is cruising at 4,000rpm rather than 3k although it doesn't feel hurried.

Hold it in the gears, however, and explore the upper end of the rev range – it tops out at 8,300rpm – and you'll surprise a few people, including yourself! It takes on a whole new character and is easy to keep on the boil, which is good because you'll need your concentration to deal with the road ahead.

Reassuringly, it's not a hair trigger between the two – you could ride it to a nominal 5,500rpm redline, which is where some tingling vibes start

to come in, and never discover Mr Hyde, or you keep it on the boil, because there's a lot of fun to be had between 4,500rpm and the real redline at 8,300, and never give a moment's thought to Dr Jekyll: it doesn't matter either way, you get both.

The Scout cruises at the legal limit at about 3,700rpm in top gear, and in controlled conditions 5k shows on the digital tacho as the speedo moves into three figures.

Despite its sporty pretensions, Indian have fitted just the one front disc and the wheel has a single flange hub, and a surprisingly good single-sided 2-pot caliper grips the only rotor in the Indian range that isn't floating ... and which doesn't match the wheels' spoke pattern. On the positive side, the brakes certainly haul the bike up quickly enough – and they're backed up by ABS on UK models – but twin front discs would dissipate the heat more efficiently if you were getting a move on, so would be ready to set the bike up for the next corner, and the next.

If you're likely to spend more time with Mr Hyde than Dr Jekyll, I suggest you fit better shocks to the back, stiffen up the forks, find out how far it'll lean and focus on a smooth ride, hitting every corner on the right line at the right speed, and hold the brakes in reserve for when you need them.

The testbike consistently delivered a little more than 120 miles to a tank, regardless of how it was being ridden, and its modest reserve only caught me out a couple of times, the first time being when stuck in traffic, facing



down a steepish dip and just half a mile from a fuel station up the other side. That was easily resolved by freewheeling to the bottom of the dip and repriming the fuel rail with the bike facing uphill again: the fuel pump pick-up would sensibly appear to be at the back of the tank. Looking back over the fuel receipts, I never squeezed more than 12.28-litres into even an empty tank and have already resolved to fill up as close to 100-miles as is practical and only start panicking at 115.

In an ideal world, the single simple instrument would have come with a gear indicator, twin trips and a fuel gauge – it is, after all, the same speedometer used on a range of Polaris products, just with a different face – and the LCD Multi Function Display does show that information and much more on other bikes. As supplied, its four distinct modes alongside a permanent clock are an odometer, single trip, digital tachometer and engine coolant temperature, but it will display warning alerts like lo-fuel.

While we have survived for generations with nothing more complicated than an odometer, trip, speedo and a reserve position on the fuel tap, a second trip, fuel gauge and a gear indicator would be useful.

Sadly we will have to live without a proper fuel gauge because the Scout uses a thermistor to trigger the low fuel light, rather than a float to measure the fuel level, but I'm hopeful for a gear indicator as part of a software upgrade, and a second trip is just obvious on a bike →





that requires you to plan fuel stops based on distance travelled.

Size-wise, it is actually about the same size as a mid-seventies Super Glide, and at 255kg fully fuelled is marginally lighter than a Sportster, but feels a lot lighter which can only be the result of a lower centre of gravity.

Picking it off its stand, I was forced to confront my biggest fear. What if Polaris had just built a modern bike and slapped an Indian badge on the side? Back in the 1970s, the differences between a CB750, a Bonneville, an R75 and a Super Glide were manifold, but what actually sets an American motorcycle apart in these days of advanced, global engineering?

The only way to find out was to put some serious miles on it and see how long it would take for the honeymoon period to wear off.

With Brightona looming and some other stuff to shoot while I was in the South-East, the chance to log a one-way 250-mile trip of mainly soul-sapping motorways offered an inauspicious start, but even five hours in the small solo saddle did little to diminish my growing regard for this nimble lane splitter. And most of that was with Amanda in the rear view mirrors in the car, carrying enough junk to overload two Chieftains.

Sure, with my feet out front on the forward controls, I was locked into a single position with little opportunity to shift my backside to prevent it numbing, but I've ridden more expensive bikes with bigger and less comfortable saddles. Breaking the journey for coffee or fuel every 100-miles or so didn't hurt, but you have always got to face the saddle again: I'm convinced that the leather cover over decent foam makes a difference and I've yet to approach it with a sense of dread ... well, unless it has been raining and I haven't got waterproof trousers, because a leather cover does have its downsides.

With the right panniers, the Scout could just about cut it as a soft tourer – the only serious limiting factor being the fuel range – but while it was capable on the motorway, it truly came alive when hooning down empty back roads between Hastings and Rye, over the Marsh and back again.

The Sunday morning early run to Brighton on quick dual carriageways, running solo on near empty roads, gave me chance to get the motor spinning and it just flies, while the return journey tracking the coast, mixing it with the flat-capped Sunday brigade, demonstrated that it had enough torque for me to lose any sense

of what gear I was in. For the record, it's only really embarrassing when you realise you've been hunting for neutral between third and fourth gear!

As the miles racked up, the novelty steadfastly refused to wear off and it was joined by something hugely reassuring: it did feel like an American bike, despite being no better able to define what that actually means.

It has presence, it is ever so slightly out of synch with the norm and it has character: and, quite unexpectedly, I engaged with it.

Not in a 'flog the Shovel and buy one' way, but more a 'seriously contemplating parking the two side by side ... with the Buell'.

Never mind, the 250-mile run home would soon fix that: the weather was proper 'orrible and the forecast showed no signs of any dry stretches, but I'd taken the precaution of packing a full face helmet and the excellent FXRG oversuit, so it was only a matter of being wary of the tyres.

So, am I cured?

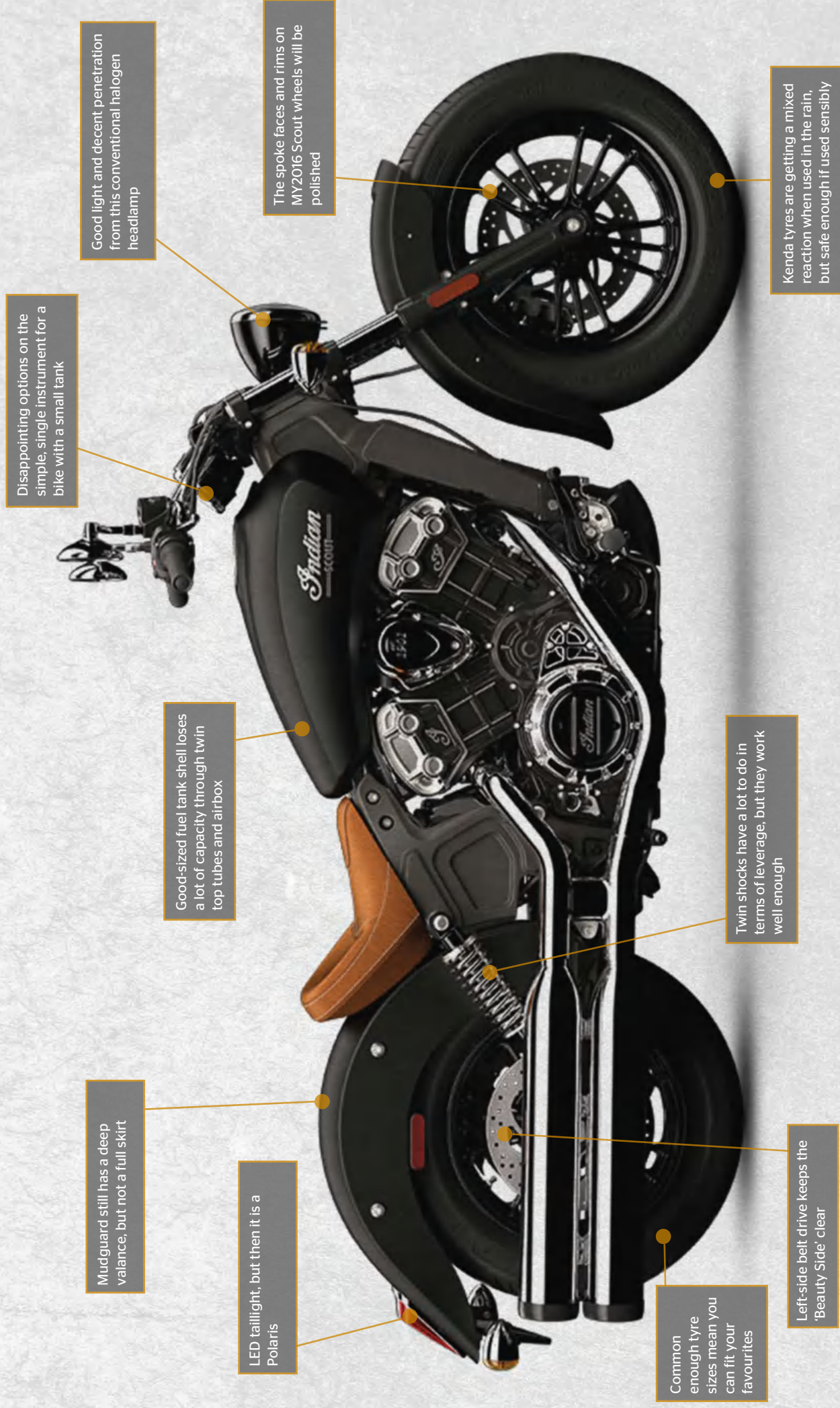
Err, no. If anything I'm more enthusiastic about it than I was when the penny first dropped, and it's going to be painful to hand it back because I feel that I've barely scratched the surface.

I want to try more shocks, to tighten up the front end and to lose the silly indicators on unnecessarily ugly brackets because there has got to be a better solution. And I want to fit some pipes that will let some of the noise out, paint the frame black and give Don Bloxidge a call, then run a keyline round the rims of the blacked-out wheels to give them more definition and have a good look at what can be done with those mudguards.

And I'd love to know how much more potential is in that motor.

If this is the future of American motorcycles – alongside traditional long-stroke OHV-powered, air-cooled bikes, of course – then bring it on! ★

TECH SPEC: INDIAN SCOUT



TECH SPEC: INDIAN SCOUT

DIMENSIONS

Overall Length	91 in. (2311 mm)
Overall Width	34.6 in. (880 mm)
Overall Height	47.5 in. (1207 mm)
Seat Height (laden/unladen)	25.3 / 26.5 in. (643 / 673 mm)
Wheelbase	61.5 in. (1562 mm)
Ground Clearance	5.3 in. (135 mm)
Rake/Trail	29°/4.7 in. (119.9 mm)
Dry Weight	520 lbs. (236 kg)
Wet Weight	560 lbs. (255 kg)
GVWR	988 lbs. (449 kg)

CAPACITIES

Fuel	3.3 gal. (12.5 l)
Fuel Reserve	0.5 gal. (1.9 l)
Engine Oil	4 qts. (3.8 l) with filter at oil change
Radiator Coolant	2.75 qts (2.6 l)

ENGINE

Engine Type	Liquid cooled DOHC 4v 60° V-twin
Displacement	69 cu. in. (1133 cc)
Compression Ratio	10.7:1
Valve Train	4 Valves per cylinder, graded tappets.
Bore and Stroke	3.898" x 2.898" (99mm x 73.6mm)
Fuel System	Closed Loop Fuel Injection, 54 mm throttle body
Exhaust System	Split Dual Exhaust with Cross-over
Rev Limit	8300 RPM
Idle RPM	1100 +/- 50 RPM Fully Warm
Lubrication System	Semi-Dry Sump

DRIVE SYSTEM

Primary Drive	Gear Drive with Wet Multi-Plate Clutch
Transmission Type	6 Speed Sliding Mesh
Primary Drive Ratio	16.74:1
Gear Ratios	GearboxOverall
1st	2.769:110.926:1
2nd	1.882:17.427:1
3rd	1.500:15.918:1
4th	1.273:15.022:1
5th	1.125:14.439:1
6th	1.036:14.087:1
Final Drive Type	Belt Drive, 141-Tooth
Transmission Pulley	28-Tooth
Rear Wheel Pulley	66-Tooth
Final Drive Ratio	2.357:1

CHASSIS

Frame	4-piece sand-cast aluminium frame with integral airbox and steel top-tubes
Front Suspension	41mm Telescopic Forks with 4.7 in. (120mm) travel
Rear Suspension	Dual shocks with 3 in. (76 mm) travel
Swingarm	Steel
Front Brakes	Single-sided 2-pot caliper with 298mm Rotor and ABS
Rear Brakes	1-pot caliper with 298mm Rotor and ABS
Front Wheel	3.5 in. x 16 in. Cast Aluminium
Rear Wheel	3.5 in. x 16 in. Cast Aluminium
Front Tyre	130/90-16 72H Indian-branded Kenda K673F
Rear Tyre	180/80-16 71H Indian-branded Kenda K673

ELECTRICAL

Alternator	460W @ 3000 RPM
Battery	12 volt, 12 amp/hour, 210 CCA, maintenance-free AGM
Voltage Regulator	14.5 volts/32 amp
Headlight	Osram HB2 60/55w
Tail/Brake Light	Non-Serviceable LED
Turn Signal	RY10W
License Plate	Non-Serviceable LED
Front Fender Light	Non-Serviceable LED
Speedometer	Non-Serviceable LED
Indicator Lights	Non-Serviceable LED
Instruments	Electronic speedometer - user configurable for mph or km/h - with Multi-Function Display (MFD) showing odometer, trip, tach, engine coolant temperature and clock. Indicator lights for neutral, high beam, turn signals, low fuel, check engine, chassis fault.

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lindh.co.uk



3. Motorcycle Centre Orrell

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mcobikes.co.uk



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lindh.co.uk



5. Thunder Road Limited

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0121 766 8111
thunderroad.com



6. Crazy Horse

Bury St. Edmunds, IP32 6NU
01284 749 645
crazyhorse.co.uk



7. HBC Motorcycles

Nottingham, NG7 2GA
01158 370 042
hbcmotorcycles.co.uk



8. Norwich Harley-Davidson

Norwich, Norfolk, NR1 3ES
01603 620 222
lindh.co.uk



9. Freedom Motorcycles

March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 8SY
01354 660 366
freedom-motorcycles.co.uk



10. Reading Harley-Davidson

Reading, Berkshire, RG6 7HN
01183 344 300
lindh.co.uk



11. Robinsons Foundry

Canterbury, CT2 7QG
01227 454 366
robinsonsfoundry.co.uk



13. The Hogfather Motorcycles

Southport, PR8 5EE
01704 541 450
TheHogfatherMotorcycles.com



13. Shaw Harley-Davidson

Lewes, East Sussex, BN8 6JA
01825 872 003
shawharley-davidson.co.uk



14. Thor Motorcycles

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SPORTING LIFE

Classic bike riders claim to love air-cooled engines, they dream of V-twins and positively purr at the thought of pushrods. And they rarely even mention Harleys. Frank Westworth bucked a trend.

Words: Frank Westworth **Photography:** Rowena Hoseason and Frank Westworth

Americans often refer to motorcycles as 'scooters', which I've always found to be both quaint and amusing. What they call what I call scooters I have no idea, but after my first year with the bike you can see in the pictures hereabout I believe I am starting to understand the terminology a little. The bike is a Sportster, courtesy of Harley-Davidson, and it does indeed scoot. That is, in fact, a surprisingly accurate description of the way it does what it does; it scoots around.

Before I break into the meaty stuff about what it is, how it goes, how well it scoots, we're going to drift back in time a little, back to 2001. I was editing Classic Bike Guide

magazine, and for reasons too profoundly incomprehensible to remember I found myself riding a test Harley for a fortnight. I'd ridden a lot of them before, and – being completely honest – had not liked any of them and had actively disliked a couple. I'm an old hippy and always ended up suggesting that if their owners liked them, that was great, but they were not for me.

That test bike fixed it. I told myself to stop treating it as though it was just another bike and instead sit back to see what it does before judging it: Rule Number One in The Big Book Of Roadtesting For Boys. Girls can invent their own rules, as always.





By the time I was piling over the magnificent Clee Hill and getting close to home I wanted to carry on all the way west, maybe to America, which lies over that way, so I'm told.

The next couple of weeks changed my views on these most famous of American motorcycles completely ... but only this particular one. Indeed, when I returned it to Harley I asked them to sell it to me, which they did.

That first American monster is now long gone but it remains a unique machine in one odd way: I bought it through the motorcycle trade and sold it back into the trade at a profit, and I told myself that if I managed to find another exactly like it I would buy it if I could afford it. And I have: it's in The Shed now and on the road this year, so look out!

But that bike is not the one I'm writing about.

Like lots of us, I am starting to look for a little less mass in my motorcycles. This is a relatively recent development and not entirely welcome, but it is a familiar topic whenever I meet up with other old Brit bike riders. I was after a machine which was low in the seat, which started itself when encouraged only by strenuous button-pushing, which was unobtrusive, steered well, stopped well, went well enough and which – above all else – I actually wanted to own.

Own.

A big word. →



To own a bike – for me – demands that I'm involved with it. My old bikes do that for me. They all have stories to tell, and are always entertaining, but I wanted a modern 'something', and the bike you see here was in fact my wife's suggestion. She saw one parked up and said; 'That is the one.' She was correct, as always.

I had never actually liked the lightweight Harleys. Ridden loads, but never liked them at all. Sorry, generations of Sportster fans, but that's the truth.

And yes, it is a Sportster: an 883 Iron to be exact. Subtle, huh? Good clunky name for a good clunky bike. It's a V-twin (had you guessed?), pushrods drive the valves, it's air-cooled and it is entirely conventional ... for a Harley. The gearbox has five ratios, there's a single disc at each end. It has a single seat, a small fuel tank and almost no chrome at all, no tassels, conches or whatever. As you see it in the pics is as it left the factory, apart from the exhaust system: that was originally chrome but happily the previous owner had ditched it in favour of something more restrained, in black. I don't like chrome. Even the engine is black ... well, mostly black.

Two big features stand head, shoulders and several extra inches above even the excellent blackness. Firstly, the engine is rubber mounted. Secondly, the final drive is by toothed belt. The reason I always disliked Sportsters in the past was because when sufficiently energised to keep the rider awake, they were as rough as that proverbial part of the ursine anatomy. I once rode a comparison test between a new 1200 Sportster and a new Norvil 850 Commando in which the Commando was way better in all respects except top speed. The Harley was just like a Norton Atlas enduring similar throttle application – harsh. Norton fixed their big twins with the rubber-mounted Commando, and Harley-Davidson employed the same engineers and fixed their big twins the same way. A good move.



So. That obvious comparison still stands. I have a Commando – and it's a definite keeper. Why would I want a Sportster as well? Simple. The Commando – mine since 1990 or so and brilliantly rebuilt by Les Emery at Norvil – is a treasure, but I do not want to hack around on it. The Sportster? It's great but has no emotional resonance for me, so far. If it goes bang I can buy another one at the local shops. And it won't go bang anyway; they don't.

Maybe you're a 'classic' rider? In that case, rather than me galloping nose-first into the traditional 'define a classic!' cliché, I'll invite you to tell me in which ways this beast fails to qualify. Would you like some history? Okay, Harley's Sportster range has been in production since 1957 – a surprisingly subtle reworking of an all-new unit construction side-valve motor that had been introduced five years before – starting out as an air-cooled V-twin and it still is. →





Remember that: 1957.

BSA's twins were still pre-unit, and Triumph were about to unleash their unit 350 and 500 twins upon an amazed world.

Lots and lots of history followed, as you'd expect, with Harley boasting a pace of technical development which really does remind me of the old Brit industry – evolution rather than revolution – which is a sort-of smart way to leap through the years and bring us up to 1986, when Harley introduced their 'Evolution' or Evo engines.

An awful lot of the traditional Harley criticism of unreliability, leaks and general uselessness was based around its old-fashioned engineering, and if the company was to survive then the new engines needed to be good. Or at least they needed to be better.

And they were, but the biggest change over the early engines were the adoption of all-aluminium for the top ends with a new bathtub-shaped

combustion chamber, ditching the older cast iron hemi. No trace of an ohc option, you'll observe, but more intriguing – certainly for yrstrly – is that Harley stuck with their long stroke, air-cooled engine, with its distinctive 'knife and fork' big end arrangement. In fact, just as they had done when the Big Twins evolved, they kept the entire bottom end, which then went on to include a 5-speed gearbox and belt final drive.

The next great leap forward came in 2004, when Harley finally bit the Norton Commando bullet and introduced a new frame complete with a Sportster-shaped version of the rubber-mounted engine. Combined with the belt drive, this removed the vibes and the hateful harshness, and all of a sudden, yrstrly found himself interested – in an academic way.

Technically, that's it. This is still a simple 2-valve ohv engine driving a 5-speed transmission by chain and the rear wheel by belt. The frame is a conventional duplex design, the forks are

utterly conventional too, it has a completely conventional disc at each end and can muster the combined gallop of a whole 47 horses to get out on the highway, as the song goes: ride a Harley and you get used to strangers bursting into that song. It's a peril.

Did I say 47hp? I did. Although Harley rarely discuss power claims, some American magazines dyno them, and the best I've found reveals that the 883 engine in this machine develops 46.7 hp at 5970rpm. This is not going to terrify anyone used to the power of a modern multi, but it certainly does explain the way the bike feels uncannily like a Norton Commando in the way it does things mechanical.

The torque figure is 48.9 ftlb at 3,780rpm, which compares with a decent Commando's output of 49 ftlb for the 750 and 56 ftlb for an 850 at 3,250rpm. The power figures are interesting too, with engineer John Favill quoting an 850 as developing 50 horsepower at a little over 6,000rpm. My own Mk3 Commando feels astonishingly similar in several ways to the 883 Sportster, with the same invigorating acceleration from almost no revs at all.

The Sportster's frame is excellent although the suspension on this generation is primitive. It's a favourite discussion topic, and lots of Sportster riders upgrade their suspenders. I've just done mine – using Progressive springs and the front and matching Progressive shocks round back – and I'm told that Harley have now done theirs, too.

The seat – a single seat, you'll observe – is comfy for some. Certainly for me, it appears to be unpadded: combine this with a rear suspension travel of a whole 41mm and you have a ride that is going to shuffle your vertebrae for you.





And it does ... to a degree. I'm happy to trade the wonderfully low seat height for less backside comfort. Low? How does 73mm – less than 29 inches – sound? And as soon as bum hits seat, that figure lessens as the suspension compresses ... a little.

Combine all that with a weight of 245kg – 540lb – and a centre of gravity somewhere below the height of the wheel spindles, and you have a really exciting bike. Not exciting in the way a new Triumph Daytona is exciting, but fun for all the family, from teenager to grandparent.

The marvel is that this modern vintage motorcycle works so well. Everything about it is strange: quirky. You sit on it – no climbing required – with your two flat feet flat on the ground. The bars are in the right place – for me, other views are available – the key goes into a switch, typically and illogically placed

below the headstock.

Switching it on, the fuel pump whines and warning lights do their thing, and you thumb the big black button on the right. At this point, the only motorcycle you could be sitting on is a Harley. There's a tiny delay. Then a clunk, a wheeze, a heave, and the engine is running. You know this not from the noise, because despite being able to look down and observe the rear cylinder head between your knees, there is almost no mechanical noise from it. Even the exhaust is very quiet – even though these pipes are not the original ones, they are as quiet. →



The bike sounds as you'd expect. It shudders out 'toboggan toboggan toboggan...' just like all Harleys, the lazy tickover of its 45-degree cylinder angle inevitably producing that traditional note. The mechanical quiet is not unrelated to the hydraulic valve clearance adjustment.

Okay. Pull in the clutch. The levers, clutch and brake, are big by trad Brit standards, and the clutch's cable operation is light and smooth. Engage a gear: left side, down for first. The earth moves for you. Pedestrians look around for the car crash. It's a big clang; you know you've engaged a gear.

Rev a little, feed the clutch and you're off.

Change into second. You will certainly hear every shift: maybe this is why loud exhausts are so popular? Then third.



By this time you're feeling comfortable so it's time to wide-open the throttle. Hang on. You do need to hang on. Acceleration with all that torque is excellent. Your right knee will be banging on the air filter. So what. More So What needs to be applied to the bike's speed. It wants to cruise at 55mph. It just does. If you let it do that, it will return insane fuel consumption figures; think 70mpg. If you don't, then you can cruise at 75mph and get 40mpg, as well as a wild time and stretched arms. And all the time, that narrow fuel tank provides a neat view of what is a very neat engine. It's impossible to forget that it's there.

Corners are great. The steering isn't fast like a modern sports bike, but it is precise. The ride on reasonable roads is ... reasonable. The ride on rough roads is ... rough. It's like a rigid and

holds its line perfectly, but other riders complain about the ground clearance being a problem. Not for me. I'd occasionally scrape the hero pegs on the BMW Rockster, but have rarely done the same on the Sportster. It's not that kind of motorcycle. It is agile, it is quick, it is characterful and it is distinctive.

Brakes? It has some. They work well. Newer bikes than this have ABS. Hurrah for them, but this is a genuinely minimalist motorcycle: a single clock and a single seat.

It is also versatile; I find that I use it for almost everything apart from touring, and that's mainly because I have a proper touring bike – a Dyna T-Sport, thanks for asking.

But there's another reason why I fancied a Sportster. I'm amused by the effect it has on

people. They are amazing. Quite suddenly, people you've known for years and who have never, ever ridden a Harley lecture you about them. Quite suddenly, total strangers accost you and want to talk bikes. They don't have a bike themselves, they may never have wanted to own one, but they all know what a Harley is and they all want to know about it ... and about motorcycling in general.

It is wicked fun because it's true that everyone who has never ridden a Harley knows how bad they are: how primitive, leaky, unreliable and so forth, and how they're ridden only by social deviants, middle-aged bankers having some sort of crisis and poseurs, desperate to make an impression. Of course they are. Smile gently, fire up and have a good day ... ★



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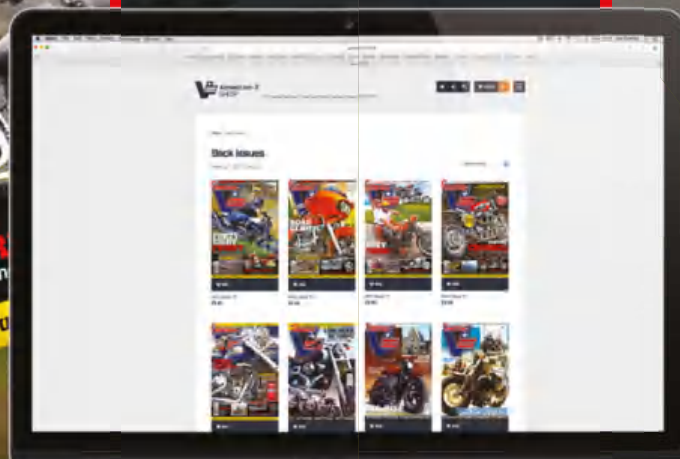
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TRIPPING OUT

Sadly, my two-wheeled transport had pedals in the summer of 1971 when *Bike* magazine was launched as a one-off *Car* magazine special, declaring itself to be “all that’s fast, furious & fun on two wheels”.

Words & Photography: Andy Hornsby



That coverline ran alongside the main image of a hippy chick reclining on a flathead chopper – all stretched springers and mile-high sissybar – and whilst my eldest brother missed that, he picked up issue 2 (which I still have) as did many others, and those Brits that hadn’t been exposed to *Easyriders* – or *Easy Rider* – couldn’t fail to notice the rise of the chopper on these shores.

Even the catchily-titled and terribly earnest “*Motorcycle, Three Wheeler and Scooter Mechanics*” picked up on the idea and started running choppers on its covers – even running an unintentionally hilarious ‘Build your own Chopper’ feature – and a new magazine called

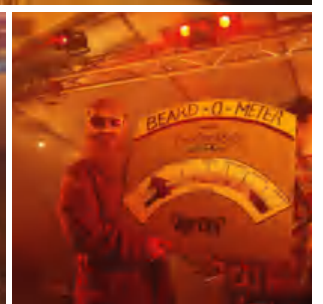
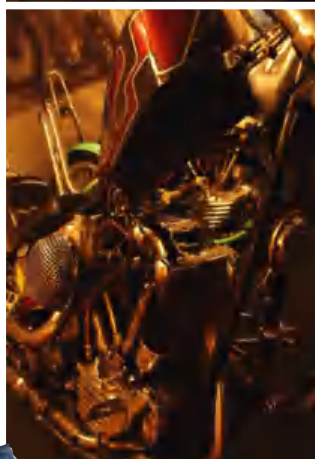
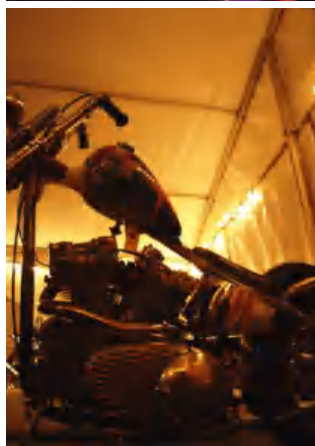
SuperBike, from the publishers of *Custom Car*, embraced choppers (and, famously, naked ladies) from the start.

As the seventies ran into the eighties, MCTW&SM went back to business as usual but with a shorter name whilst *Bike* and *SuperBike* shifted their editorial emphasis towards mainstream bikes, justifying it on the basis that the market was increasingly dominated by sportier hardware from Japan and riders themselves were changing.

SuperBike’s last big hurrah was a project chopper based on a Kawasaki Z1000 motor, which was built at about the same time as they ran an editorial explaining to the long-forked faithful that there would never be enough

people to support a custom bike magazine. The staffer in charge of that build had previously been a freelancer for *Custom Car* and the go-to guy for their two-wheeled features – but then he had also been listed as a custom builder in *Bike*’s Chopper Special and had been riding and building bikes since his last days at school. He called the project chopper ‘Back Street Hero’: his name was Steve Myatt.

Sticking two fingers up to that editorial, written by an editor who didn’t share his love of choppers and the whole lifestyle surrounding it, Steve assembled a talented team of passionate contributors from the custom bike scene – Alison, Maz, Stu, Mutch, Foggy – working as writers, photographers and artists, and with a ➔



mate from school, Alastair McFarlane, who had more business acumen, launched Back Street Heroes magazine in the autumn of 1983: an anarchic, irreverent magazine that didn't know how to take itself too seriously.

The timing was about perfect.

The Hell Angels' Kent Custom Bike Show was in its fifth year and attracting a lot of attention at the Halfway Cafe, and whilst Harleys – and certainly radically chopped Harleys – were still relatively uncommon on these shores, there were plenty of inexpensive, unloved British parallel twins and big singles to use as the basis for a cool-looking custom and the scene exploded.

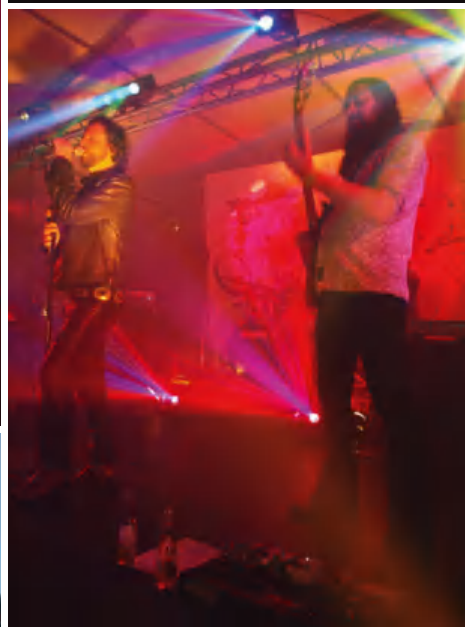
"The European Custom Bike Magazine" became essential reading for those who couldn't keep a straight face when invited to 'putt down to the cantina for some suds, bro' in any broad English dialect and served as a catalyst for many of the decisions we've made since, but like everything else before it, it grew up. Worse than that, everything that has been launched

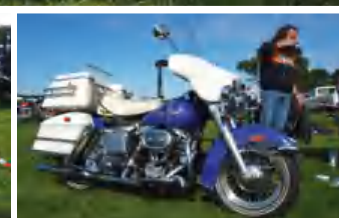
against it since has taken it head-on, competing with the self-important contemporary pastiche of the once-brilliant and irreverent magazine that engaged the kids we once were, rather than recognizing what it was missing and trying to fill that gap to engage the next generation.

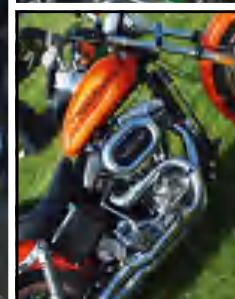
Which is why The Trip Out is such a breath of fresh air.

It wasn't a matter of looking at an existing formula and reproducing it – and bearing in mind that Anna Porter is one of the organisers of the excellent Hot Rod Hayride, that must surely have been tempting – and it doesn't pander to the demands of an aging generation for whom the facilities of a modern rugby club represents the bare acceptable minimum, but it has established itself ridiculously quickly as being not the biggest, not the busiest, not even the liveliest but certainly the coolest event of its kind in the country, and the one with the least attitude.

It has done so thanks to the passion of Andy, Anna, Loggy and Estelle putting on the sort of ➔









event that they would want to go to, and hoping that they're not alone. It helped in the first year that they were well known and respected amongst the Hayride crowd, but it was only a start and each year's event has been bigger than the last through word of mouth and social media. And rather than the bigger numbers compromising the vibe, the show has stamped itself on the mindset of its growing family of visitors.

A lot of that is the result of the larger-than-life Andy Porter being everywhere you look, all the time, his enthusiasm infectious as he throws himself completely into it, and everyone is happy to be there to share it with him: not through any sense of duty but sheer joy.

And it is inclusive.

If it's cool, it's allowed on the show field at the heart of the main arena, defined by the trade stands – and it's as cool a place as exists in twenty-first century Britain – but it's not so anal that anyone spat their dummy out over someone parking their Jap-4 streetfighter on the show field. Not because of any 'Choppers and

Harleys only' snobbery – a West Coast billet barge or a blinged-out Heritage Softail would have looked no less incongruous – but because it stood out like a sore thumb, even amongst a varied field that included everything from Knuck and flathead choppers to a 'Bog Seat' with Apes. Maybe they didn't understand the concept and thought it was the safest parking, but if its owner was watching to see how much attention it would get, they will have been disappointed because it's not that sort of show.

What sort of show is it then?

It's a show where there's no shortage of things to do and see, from the Weirdo Beardo competition on stage between a louder and more modern selection of bands than usual – if that's not your bag head to the Widows Lounge where Crazy Ode, a refugee from Back Street Heroes' most anarchic period, did a stint on the decks this year – the Bomberdrome wall of death for bicycles, a small cinema showing biker movies all weekend, a skate half pipe, kickstart competitions and a 'weenie bite' competition ...➔



well, nearly, it's more a race. Always assuming, of course, that you can't find like-minded people to eat, drink and be merry with – and the food is good and the beer realistically priced: merry is very much down to you.

It's one for people who are comfortable in their own skin and have nothing to prove. Sure, there's a competitive edge to the custom show but the people who will be judging will be folk who turned up on something cool and have oil under their own fingernails, and they'll be more interested in how a technical challenge was met than what it cost.

And whilst it currently stands alone in the UK – there are some smaller shows, but they

are deliberately under the radar – there are events on similar lines held in France, Belgium and Holland where the custom scene looks a lot healthier than our own at the moment. Why? Probably because the custom bike lifestyle is more accessible and continues to capture the imagination of a younger generation, building and riding cool bikes ... and who ride them to The Trip Out in bigger numbers each year.

But as successful as it is, it's not done for the money – indeed, it must struggle to break even, and probably only does so because Andy doesn't fully recharge the costs of the bike that they give away, which isn't some old wreck but a full

custom, built for the event! That's done partly to make sure that people stay right to the end, in the hope that they've won it, but also because it gives something back: probably too much!

Next year it will be an American van as the giveaway, which should cost less ... but only if they don't do a number on it first. For their sakes, I hope they don't – their friends and supporters have made it clear that if it was a choice of no big prize or no Trip Out, we'll forego the prize – but they don't seem to believe in half measures.

And so The Trip Out goes from strength to strength: not everyone's cup of tea – nor should it be – but it's certainly mine. ★

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HARLEY-DAVIDSON FXSB BREAKOUT

My brief acquaintance with Harley's new custom FX Softail in the South of France a couple of years ago, was enough to convince me that the Breakout could be the street Softail that Harley-Davidson had been looking for, to match the success of the Night Train.

Words & Photography: Andy Hornsby





Revisiting it, in its CVO form little more than a year ago – indeed its original form, because the Breakout is the first bike that Harley launched as a CVO bike and then turned into a mainstream model – showed why they'd made that decision, but it occurred to me that we hadn't really put the FXSB through its paces in real world conditions.

To give the bike some context you need to look at the history of the FX Softails – and particularly their recent history – which will leave you scratching your head, and wondering how they got it so wrong for so long?

The first production Softail was an FX – in fact, the Road Worx 'Sub-Shock' frame taken to Harley-Davidson by Bill Davis was an FX, using most of the running gear off a Shovelhead Wide Glide – and the chassis was intended to recreate the cool line from headstock to rear wheel spindle beloved of chopper riders. Since the demise of the Night Train, however – arguably since the launch of the Twin Cam – the chassis has hosted a very successful range of FLs but a host of troubled FXs, resulting in the emergence of the previously-troubled Dyna range as the home of Harley's street custom range.

Not convinced?

The very capable Y2K Deuce's beautiful front forks and seventeen-inch rear wheel weren't enough to make up for the V-Rod rear mudguard and high price tag.

The reworked Softail Custom in 2007 shipped with a free sofa, possibly making it the comfiest two-up FX in any Harley family, ever, but that huge, self-parodying seat overpowered the rest of the bike.

The 2008-11 FXCW Rockers, with a number of desirable features and excellent road manners wrapped up in a new style, missed its mark, undoubtedly helped by an incredibly clever but stupid fold-out pillion on the Rocker-C, an ugly grey finish on the base model and a non weight-bearing rear mudguard on both.

And most recently, the simpler, inexpensive Blackline with its weird handlebars and a style that looked like something between a Dyna and a Sportster, demonstrated that their failure to create a new FX Softail wasn't entirely price-driven, and it flat-lined.

So when the FXSBSE appeared in the back pages of the 2013 catalogue, you could be

forgiven for thinking that Harley hadn't bothered making a mainstream version, because they'd figured that the market wasn't there any more.

It was, of course, but it needed the right bike.

The Breakout was it.

The CVO would always be a hard act to follow, with its 110-inch Twin Cam motor in 'Granite' powder-coat, breathing through Harley's highly regarded Heavy Breather air cleaner, but the simpler 103-inch FXSB didn't disappoint. With a black frame rather than the CVO's colour-matched version and a much simpler paint treatment than one of The Motor Company's most ambitious CVO paint schemes to date, it could have looked dowdy, but in reality it looked tough: more purposeful.

Its Pro Street stance – provided by the raked-out 49mm forks with a confidence-inspiring 130-section 21-inch wheel at the business end and a pair of fat blacked-out drag





bars in chunky pulled-back risers at the top – takes Harley's FX in the new direction they'd been searching for, without straying too far from people's expectations of what a Harley should be.

It even manages to find a use for the redundant fork legs and distinctive exhaust headers from the Rocker, as well as its beehive coil/ignition switch module.

It would have been nice if they'd recycled the oil tank and frame too, but half a litre less oil capacity suggests they've kicked out the front end of a regular Softail frame to 35° rather than reusing the Rocker chassis. They then added another 2° in the yokes to reign the trail back in, and created a new Rocker-like cast aluminium oil tank for the model. Okay, so it was created for the CVO, but with its mirror-polished finish hidden beneath a lustrous layer of gloss black who's going to know?

More importantly – what actually matters – is that combining a model-specific 130-section, 21-inch front tyre with the Rocker's 240/40B18 rear, they improved on the FXCW's excellent road manners, and married that running gear to a classic tank/seat/mudguard line that has more than a hint of the Blackline about it: a match made in heaven.

The only faux pas – if indeed that's what it is – is the pressed steel number plate that extends out of the back of the bobbed rear mudguard, between the indicator-cum-stop/tail lights. It's solid enough, but it compromises an otherwise beautifully clean line, as you'll see if you look at an American market model with its side-mount.

The more purposeful look is more than just cosmetic: its lighter 'Gasser' wheels – they carry half as many spokes as the stunning but difficult to clean CVOs – make the steering lighter, allowing at least as much control with

its narrow but fat drag bars as the CVO offers with its wider and taller flat-track bars. Add the improved presence of that front tyre and an aggressive riding position that pitches you further forwards, and you've got another ingredient that has been missing from FX Softails since the Night Train: attitude.

Don't get me wrong, there's nothing wrong with Harley trying to raise their game by developing civilised bikes like the Rocker and the Deuce that will attract a new type of rider, but attitude sells ... or at least it sells FX Softails.

The resulting stance is more aggressive than the CVO, and you ride it harder by default, kicking up sparks through the bends off the vertically-challenged tell-tales, sticking too far out of too-low footrests.

Call me cynical, but I've come to believe that it is deliberate – all part of the attitude →



– because there's no other reason for fitting SuperLow-style cranked rider footpegs on this bike but not the CVO. If you are feeling particularly obnoxious you could get through a pair of tell-tales in a morning, but it's far better to apply more weight to the outboard footpeg in tight turns and save them ... or swap them for the pillion footrests and give yourself another couple of degrees through the curves.

Of course, the Breakout has got something else that the less successful FX Softails didn't have, and that is the 103-inch incarnation of Harley's balanced Twin Cam engine, which has power and torque out of the box that any Night Train owner could only dream of ... or pay extra for. Don't underestimate the contribution that it makes, or the sophistication of this evolution of the motor.

Now fifteen years into its production run and never more capable in stock form, it is effortless, lazy and ridiculously forgiving if treated with respect, but with power comes responsibility and despite tipping the scales at a hefty 309kg dry, it is deceptively quick when given its head. Rolling out that torque is addictive, and it's a real blast to ride on fast A-roads, but it is also sobering when you're scrubbing off speed using a combination of the excellent engine braking and the brakes – a single 4-pot front caliper backed up by a 2-pot rear – and that weight is counting against you. That's when you'll appreciate the bigger footprint of that 130-section front tyre and the ABS ... and wish

they'd fitted a second disc, because it's not as though the 300mm disc would get in the way of appreciating the 21-inch wheel.

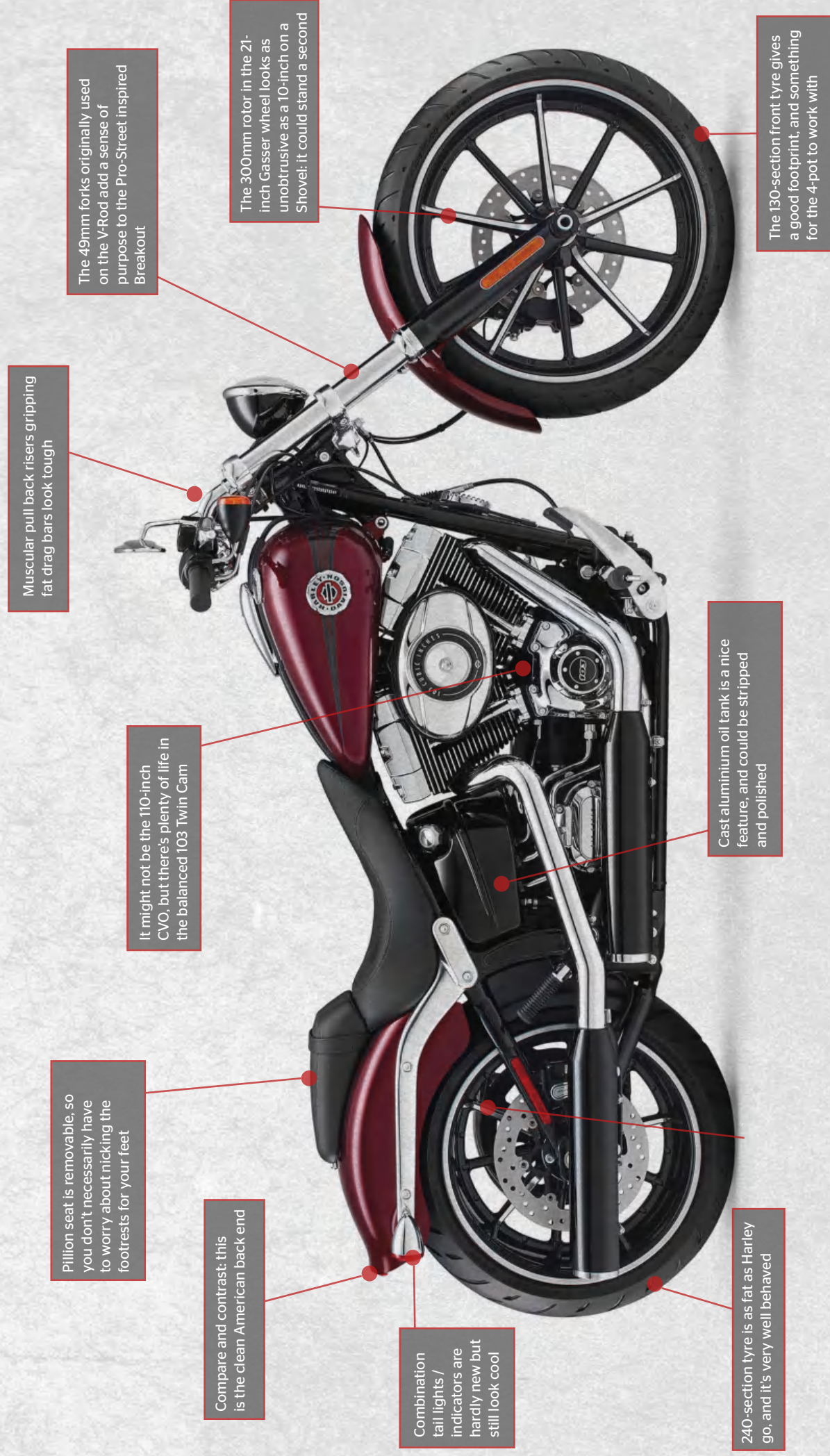
Despite the balance shafts taming its heartbeat, this motor bolted directly into a Softail frame feels more traditional than most current generation Harley-Davidsons, but a lot of that is down to the relatively harsh suspension of the chassis. It is ultimately the price you have to pay to get its style, but it's also

part of its appeal in a homogenised world and one of the reasons why Softail owners tend to stick with Softails.

For them – indeed for all of us who've missed an FX Softail with attitude – the Breakout has finally given The Motor Company a successor to the Night Train, and for 2016 it just gets better with the High Output TC103B, derived from the Rushmore tourers!



TECH SPEC: HARLEY-DAVIDSON FXSB BREAKOUT



Tech Spec: Harley-Davidson FXSB Breakout

Dimensions

Length	2445 mm (96.3 in.)
Overall Width	915 mm (36 in.)
Overall Height	1040 mm (40.9 in.),
Seat Height (unladen)	660 mm (26 in)
Ground Clearance	120 mm (4.7 in.)
Rake (steering head)	35°
Fork Angle	37°
Trail	146 mm (5.7 in.)
Wheelbase	1710 mm (67.3 in.)
Tyres <i>(Dunlop® Harley-Davidson® Series, bias blackwall front and radial blackwall rear)</i>	1151 lbs (523 kg)
Front - D408F	130/60B21 63H
Rear - D407	240/40R18 79V
Fuel Capacity <i>(warning light at approximately 38 L)</i>	18.9 L (5 gal)
Oil Capacity <i>(w/filter)</i>	3.3 L (3.5 qts.)
Transmission Capacity	.95 L (1 qt.)
Primary Chain Case Capacity	.95 L (1 qt.)
Weight	
As Shipped	309 kg (681 lbs.)
In Running Order	322 kg (710 lbs.)
Gross Vehicle Weight Rating	533 kg (1175 lbs.)
Gross Axle Weight Rating	
Front	188 kg (415 lbs.)
Rear	345 kg (760 lbs.)

Performance

Engine Torque	130 Nm (95.9 ft-lb) @ 2750 RPM
Lean Angle (per J1168)	0.8 US Gal (3.0 l)
Right	23.4°
Left	23.4°
Fuel Economy (EPA urban/highway test)	5.6 l/100 km (42 mpg)

Engine

Engine	Air-Cooled, High Output Twin Cam 103B™
Valves	Pushrod-operated, overhead valves with hydraulic, self-adjusting lifters; two valves per cylinder
Bore x Stroke	98.4 mm x 111.1 mm (3.87 in. x 4.374 in.)
Displacement	1690 cc (103.1 cu. in.)
Compression Ratio	9.6:1
Fuel System	Electronic Sequential Port Fuel Injection (ESPI)
Air Cleaner	Paper, washable
Lubrication System	Pressurized, dry-sump

Drive System

Primary Drive	Chain, 34/46 ratio
Final Drive	Belt, 32/66 ratio
Clutch	Multi-plate, wet
Transmission	6-Speed Cruise Drive®
Gear Ratios (overall)	
1st	9.311
2nd	6.454
3rd	4.793
4th	3.882
5th	3.307
6th	2.79

Warranty

Warranty	24 months (unlimited mileage)
Service Interval	First 1600 km (1000 miles), every 8000 km (5000 miles), thereafter

Chassis

Frame	Mild steel tubular frame; rectangular section backbone; stamped, cast, and forged junctions; forged tender supports; MIG welded joints; MIG welded
Swingarm	Mild steel, round tube sections, forged junctions; MIG welded
Front Forks	49 mm telescopic, single, mono-tube gas shock wit adjustable preload and constant rate linkage, 3.0 in (75mm) travel.
Rear Shocks	Hidden, horizontal-mounted, coil-over
Wheels	Gasser Cast Aluminum
Front	21 in. x 3.5 in. (533 mm x 88.9 mm)
Rear	18 in. x 8 in. (457 mm x 203 mm)
Brakes	90/90-21 Dunlop Elite 3
Caliper Type	4-piston fixed front; 2-piston floating rear
Rotor Type <i>(diameter x width)</i>	Black, Split Z-spoke floating rotors
Front	300 mm x 5 mm (11.8 in. x 0.2 in.)
Rear	292 mm x 5.8 mm (11.5 in. x 0.23 in.)
Anti-lock Braking System	Standard
Suspension Travel	
Front Wheel	117 mm (4.6 in.)
Rear Wheel	92 mm (3.6 in.)

Electrical

Battery	Sealed, maintenance-free, 12V, 19-amp/hour, 315 cca
Charging	Three-phase, 38-amp system
Starting	12 kW electric with solenoid shift starter motor engagement
Lights	Non-Serviceable LED
Headlamp	(Quartz Halogen)55-watt low beam, 60-watt high beam
Tail/Stop Lights	LED combination Stop/Tail/Turn
Front Signal Lights	Incandescent self-cancelling
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“

Nothing is as astounding as the effect these BST 100% carbon fibre wheels have had on my bike... I can't believe what a 'simple' wheel can do to the performance of a motorcycle.

The weight saving over the original wheels is equally as dramatic; we're talking 70% less rotating mass here! Imagine putting three two-kilogram bags of sugar in a sock and swinging them around your head, they will pull you off your feet. Well I've lost that on both front and rear, possibly more. At least 12-14kg off the wheels is an incredible result, no? ... The XR1200 now feels more like a 650 Supermotard bike to ride, it changes direction with just a drop of either wrist and the acceleration and braking is also better off for the rim change. And just look at them, what works of art they are.

Bill Hunter, 2Wheels Magazine

”



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GREY GHOSTS

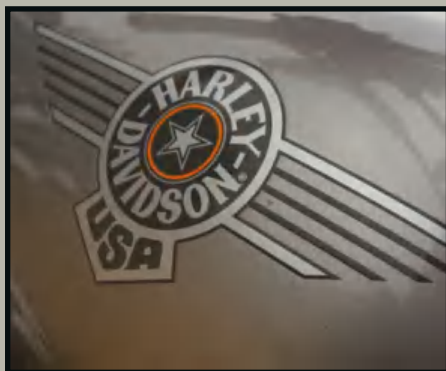
When a manufacturer – even one already famous for creating iconic motorcycles – comes out with a new motorcycle that achieves that elevated status within its first year, you know that it's something special.

Words & Photography: Andy Hornsby



That's exactly what happened with the Fat Boy, and part of that has got to be that it inspired a creation myth of its own instantly and simultaneously in editorial offices around the world, which was a neat trick in that pre-internet world.

I was a dogsbody in the editorial office of HOG International magazine when the press release and first images arrived by post, and within ten minutes – after the initial derision that had met its name had calmed down – all talk was of the new Harley-Davidson that had been named after the bomb that America dropped on Japan.



It didn't matter one iota that there wasn't one bomb called the Fat Boy, that there was no mention made of any such association in the press release or that it would be a bizarrely crass thing to do for a company looking at developing its Japanese market; it captured people's imaginations and the facts have been adjusted to suit the myth ever since.

Well, the alternative was to focus on the questionable decision to call it a Fat Boy, wondering how any magnificent example of manhood could keep a straight face while admitting to friends that they wanted to ride a Fat Boy: the capital F and B don't come across when spoken. →



Twenty-five years later, of course, if you heard someone talking about a seeing a fat boy, your first thought would be of a motorcycle.

There is the chance that it was the best marketing campaign of all time, of course, providing creative writers with everything they needed to jump to the wrong conclusion, and to do so en-masse without implicating The Motor Company. Calling the next model the Bad Boy suggests otherwise, however, unless the creative director responsible had moved on.

And everything those creative minds needed was indeed there.

It was presented in the silver of high altitude American bombers, the tank badge was so reminiscent of the USAF logo as to wonder if they'd licensed it – remembering that this was at a time when we didn't have Google to flash up a thousand genuine examples within a couple of seconds – and there was the name: an amalgam of Fat Man and Little Boy. It was more than enough.

The story of the seven yellow rings followed later – there were no yellow rings on either bomb: the nearest thing to that was the Fat Man being painted in a pumpkin yellow, rust-preventing zinc-chromate primer and subsequently 'cocooned' with two black bands using a hand-sprayed sealant, but why let the truth get in the way of a good story? And like all conspiracies, the more Harley deny it, the more people want to believe it.



You've almost got to wonder whether FLSTF would have been as iconic by any other name, and I think the answer is yes. It's more than a name – more than a myth – it's still a great looking bike today but twenty-five years ago it was a game-changer.

It was Harley's first heavyweight Custom, and as is often The Motor Company's way with a new custom bike, they really pushed the boat out for maximum impact.

It was also a masterclass in parts bin engineering: more than the sum of its parts, but then it was the perfect combination of just enough new model-specific parts alongside the right bits from stock, nicely put together and in the right finish.

If you're looking for new parts, other than the 1990-only trim – the points and derby covers, yellow rocker box spacers and the trim round the classic FL ignition switch – you're looking at a shotgun exhaust headers, a new seat with a textured leather insert and matching tank trim, both hand-laced, a new front mudguard and that tank decal. The silver motor came from the plain Heritage Softail but with chrome rather than polished covers; so did the smaller fuel tanks – a modest 3½ gallons split between the two halves helping to make the rest of the bike look fatter – with the same chrome console, foot controls and forks with their tins. The handlebars were pure FLH and the wheels were a pair of cast discs first seen on the back of a 1986 Softail Custom.

It doesn't add up to a hill of beans, but colour-match the frame, rear mudguard struts and oil tank and you've got a very distinctive bike.

If you wanted one – and plenty did, which was a shame because there was very limited availability – it would have set you back £9,133, and you wouldn't have been rewarded for →





SPECIFICATIONS

Bike:	1990 Harley-Davidson FLSTF Fat Boy
Engine:	45° OHV air-cooled V2 Evolution V-twin
Bore & Stroke:	88.85 x 108mm (3.498 x 4.250 in.)
Displacement:	1340cc / 80ci
Compression Ratio:	8.5:1
Torque:	80ftlbs@4,000rpm
Fuel System:	40mm CV carburettor
Exhaust System:	Shotgun shorty duals
Transmission:	5-speed constant mesh
Primary Drive:	Duplex chain
Final Drive:	Gates Kevlar-reinforced Poly Chain belt
Length:	2382.5mm (93.8 in.)
Wheelbase:	1587.5mm (62.5 in.)
Seat Height:	673mm (26.5 in.)
Ground Clearance:	152.4mm (6.0 in.)
Rake/Trail:	33° / 127mm (5.0 in.)
Dry Weight:	295kg (650lbs)
Fuel Capacity:	16 litres (3.5 gallons / 4.2 US gallons)
Oil Capacity:	2.84 litres (2.5 quarts / 3 US quarts)
Brakes:	Single piston floating caliper on 292mm rotors
Tyres:	MT90x16
Wheels:	3.5x16-inch cast disc
Lean Angle (L/R):	30° / 30°
Instruments:	Speedometer with odometer and resettable trip
Colour Options:	Fine Metallic Silver





being patient and resolving to buy the next year's model once they'd sold the 1990 allocation, because it was almost a different bike. The 1991 model offered a range of colours – including two-tones – they didn't include the Fine Silver Metallic of the original; the engine was the regular black and chrome Evo motor without the yellow highlights, and its black frame contrasted with the chrome oil tank and struts. Only two of the rings survived, and that was only because they were in the decal.

It was still a Fat Boy, but somehow it was less so and the legend of the Grey Ghosts was born.

It is astonishing that Harley haven't cashed in on the kudos of that first Fat Boy, and it's not

as though that haven't had the opportunity: there has been at least one Fat Boy in every catalogue since 1990 – there are currently three, and as stunning as the Fat Boy S looks in its blacker than black shade, how much cooler would it have been as a Grey Ghost? But then I suppose that only makes the originals all the more sought after, and the legend so much more appealing.

These two belong to Nick Larkin, owner of V-Twin Motorcycle in Rye Harbour, who was so blown away by the heavyweight custom that he is apparently on a mission to collect them. There's a third with his name on it and he's managed to secure the last stocks in Europe of the yellow-trimmed accessories in case he fancies



building a couple more, but you get the sense that it's more to stop others from building fakes!

Both are variations on the original – well, they are Harley-Davidsons and even a Grey Ghost doesn't get through twenty-five years without an owner wanting to stamp something of their own style upon it – with one being much less messed around with than the other: no prizes for spotting which is which.

The silver-on-silver example ... ah, that's not going to work. Mmmm.

Okay, try this: as well as demonstrating what a difference a couple of choice accessories can make to a bike's style and function, both bikes testify to the reality of the early 1990s as far as stock Evos went ... or rather didn't, and it's much the same story on the brakes. →



The more functional, chunkier bike – with its improved lighting courtesy of a Heritage Softail spotlight bar – now breathes in through a Mikuni HSR42 and out via a pair of Harley's much missed Screamin' Eagle slip-ons, slipped on to a pair of headers that lack a balance pipe beneath the air-cleaner. And to make sure that weight can be brought up sharp, there's a PM differential bore 6-pot gripping a floating rotor almost big enough to mask the front wheel's centre, backed by a PM 4-pot in harness at the rear.

The lower-slung, dressier of the two has been upgraded using an S&S Super-E and Vance & Hines Long Shots, with a Harrison Billet 6-pot working on the original 11 1/2-inch rotor at the sharp end and the original brake dressed up



in a chrome cover recognising that the wooden but powerful rear brakes have their place. It also has the lower accessory pillion seat made for the model – complete with its matching leather insert – helping to bring the silhouette down.

They've both come some way from the original bike, but that's one of the main strengths about any Harley-Davidson, and their custom offerings in particular.

They've come some way in terms of years, too, and it's great to see how well they're holding up against time because so often you see something in a showroom and can only guess how it will look after a few winters – or even a few wet summers.

They're bedding in well: two and half decades of patina have given them a loved but lived-in look.

Despite clearly remembering their launch, I'm surprised how well they've taken on the mantle of classic Americana, and I'm not sure if that makes me feel old, or as though I should be congratulating Willie G for having done such a good job in creating a timeless motorcycle.

Combined nostalgia with a vision of the future in 1990, they manage to look completely at home alongside Nick's late fifties' GMC Stepside ... although that perhaps shouldn't be too much of a surprise really, because that's when Harley's Hydra Glide – the inspiration for Harley's heavyweight Softails – was rolling off a certain production line in Milwaukee. ★





PURVEYORS

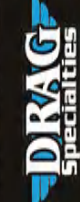
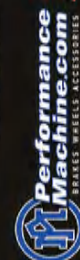
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HDRCGB

INTERNATIONAL POKER RUN



With one of the best sites on the UK bike rally circuit, in terms of its facilities and location if you are based in the South-East, the Essex Poker Run has been on my to-do list for years.

Words: Andy Hornsby **Photography:** Amanda Wright and Andy Hornsby

And this year was it, not least because it hosted the International, extending the event by another day, and making it more attractive to Europeans who hadn't used up their overseas budget attending the Super Rally in May.

Hosted at Essex Outdoor's site on Mersea Island, which has the advantages that HOG used to make the most of at Bisley; notably solidly-built accommodation for those tired of camping, and – in the case of Mersea – are happy to upgrade to a communal bunkhouse. Little more than a big open room with two tiers of bunks

round the walls, they're not private but they are more than comfortable enough, and have the added benefit of wall sockets for charging phones and satnavs – and phones used as satnavs. And they put up more resistance than canvas to onshore winds, should they pick up.

It's just one small part of a good, solidly built infrastructure that includes a dining hall where you can pick up a full breakfast for a fiver if you work within their timetable, a clean and relatively modern shower and toilet block, and, of course, a bar with an adjoining hall that's perfect for putting on a band. →







Being the HDRCGB's 2015 International, the site had actually opened on the Thursday, which brought the main event – the Poker Run of its name – forward to the Friday to catch as many folk as possible before the Europeans went home. The other activities were spread out over the rest of the weekend, giving everything a laid back, relaxed vibe ... well, except in the bar which was rocking, and seemed to be full of people that we knew, and from all corners of the country!

One day I really must bite the bullet and do a Poker Run, mainly because it'll be the easiest way to get my head round how it works, but it wasn't

going to be at Essex: we'd rocked up on the Friday evening with just enough light left to pitch the tent before heading to the small town and its cash machine on the west side of the island.

With little to do on the Saturday morning, between breakfast and the custom show after lunch, it is a sign of how well established the show is that groups of riders saddled-up and disappeared on annual pilgrimages – apparently there are some good fish restaurants around – but I stayed around because I was on a promise. Panhead Boris had introduced me to Richard whose 45 outfit was featured last issue, and I was off to play Gromit ... sorry, to photograph it. →

We were back in plenty of time for the custom show, which showed the diversity of riders that The Poker Run attracts, but I've got to confess that I only had eyes for one bike in my own personal category: the bike I'd like to go home on.

Rubbing shoulders with a Flying Merkel replica, a beautiful Knucklehead bobber, and an minimal Exile steamroller, among stunning paint jobs and simple honest customs, was the image of my old 78th Anniversary FLH in

excellent original condition, complete with all the decals and badges that I couldn't wait to take off my own, way back in eighty-something ... and a sidecar. Funny how time changes you.

It will be especially interesting to see how time changes young Billy Cook, who continued polishing his ride as he went up to collect his prize ... for Best Pushbike. You can't help but wonder how far away his first Harley will be: looks like they start 'em young in Essex. ★



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3X3

Three is a magic number acknowledged by the rule of three in literature, the rule of thirds in photography, the innate strength of a triangle, and it is the right number of people in a rock band ... unless none of the musicians can sing. Discuss.

Words & photography: Andy Hornsby



It's not technically the right number of wheels for a motorcycle, however, but we give them special dispensation because when they're done right, they're cool ... and because they allow people with no sense of balance – or the time to take a bike test – to experience life behind bars, as at least one T-shirt puts it.

It's seldom the right number of spires for a cathedral either, but where better to shoot a trike built for Phil Campbell, the chord-shredding lead guitarist from Motörhead, than in front of a celebration of medieval gothic excess? I'm not sure that the fella upstairs was too impressed by the idea, sending rain of biblical proportions to disrupt the proceedings, but He relented before we found it necessary to build an Ark, and He ultimately delivered us from the City of Lichfield on dry roads, which gave us the chance to put it through its paces before it made its eagerly anticipated return journey to Phil.

It started life as one of three High Balls presented to Motörhead

at The Hard Rock Café in Oslo – individually customised for each band member – to promote Victory's then-new bobber, and it might have ended there if Phil hadn't been so blown away by the bike that he wanted to be able to use it. He took it home to Wales after the tour and set about getting his bike licence, but that kept getting deferred by the next tour and the next, and it seemed such a shame for it to just gather dust. Could it be a trike?

"Of course it could", was the only sensible answer: whatever it takes to make it more useable, and so Victory and Rewaco Trikes collaborated with Motörhead's European sponsor, Jonas Sveberg, to make it happen.

It made sense to build on the excellent paint already laid down by Terje Aspmo, the artist responsible for the band's 'Aftershock' album artwork, and the hand-tooled leather saddle by Marius Mellebye featuring the instantly recognisable Snaggletooth graphic, but other than that it had to work ... and it had to be cool!

Best known for their low slung, sculpted-body trikes, that look like the ultimate evolution of the classic VW-engined Praying Mantis-style

three wheelers of the eighties and nineties, Rewaco had a distinct advantage in that their CT 1700 V custom rear end had been developed for the Vegas 8-Ball so it could be adapted relatively easily to the High Ball, but there's more to a custom build than bolting a couple of parts together – even parts designed to fit – and it was more than just deciding whether Phil needed the full touring kit with a top box and armchair. It might be terribly sensible, but rock and roll it ain't: a pair of Jockeys and a credit card doesn't take much stowing.

One the main elements of the Rewaco CT 1700 V conversion is the Hydro-Pneumatic CTAF active chassis, which offers independent rear suspension to the rear wheels: something you will appreciate if you've ridden a trike with a 'live axle'. The coupled suspension units counter centrifugal force in the bends, preventing body roll, and each wheel is able to react to imperfections on its side of the road without affecting the whole trike, which makes for a much smoother ride.

All of that is buried beneath the central bodywork and takes up most of it, which explains why it isn't a problem to run the →



twin exhausts out through there: there's not a lot else you can do with the space, and it does look cool!

Being built in Germany, where there is an increasing move towards zero tolerance for exhaust noise, the sound is more sophisticated than cool. That's easily resolved, though, because there's just enough space in the boot to fit something that is more important to a travelling axeman than a minimal pillion seat big enough for a nubile groupie: a Marshall amp – in this case a clever 10w practice amp with Clean and Overdrive channels, and a Contour control on the Overdrive to get the tone just right.

German regulations also explain the crashbar-mounted spotlamps, spaced well out from the centreline of the bike. They look powerful enough to be headlamps, and that's because they are, while the original headlamp looks blindly out from the headstock ... well, it will do until it gets wired up as a spotlamp: unless Phil has a chat with his mate, Hank from Trike Design – who used to book Phil in his pre-Motorhead days to play National Chopper Club gigs locally – and they switch it to sidelights on the mudguards and a central headlamp.

The CT 1700 V would ordinarily inherit the skinny 21-inch front wheel of the donor bike, with a 17-inch offered as an alternative – the lack of rubber at the front end on something so much bigger than a Vegas compensated for by a linked brake system operated by either hand or foot – but as this started life as a High Ball they stuck with its classic 16-inch spoke wheel, relaced to a chromed steel rim and matched up to a pair of Dayton wire wheels wearing fat 255x45 tyres.

The original, conventional 43mm fork legs have been introduced to a pair of adjustable yokes. These kick the rake out a little further without changing the actual steering head, reducing the trail and making the heavy three wheeler a lot more manageable at low speeds without compromising its high speed stability.

Rewaco rate the regular Vegas trike as good for 165km/h – just over the ton on Germany's Autobahns. It certainly felt rock solid on the road at the legal speeds that we were exploring, and the 106-inch Freedom engine wasn't having any difficulty in pulling the extra weight – 119 extras kilos, or the equivalent of three groupies or maybe one Lemmy, complete with bass ... in full stage gear.

To further ease manoeuvrability, it comes with a mechanical reverse gear that effectively reverses the drive from the motor to the differential ... once you've gone through a series of complicated rituals to get round the safety interlocks, preventing you from selecting it accidentally or if you've been at the Columbian marching powder. It's way better than a jerky push-button electric solution, if only because you retain full clutch control and look cooler than a polar bear's Cornetto.

And it is that functionality that is the hallmark of a trike that really has been designed to be ridden.

I'll be the first to admit that I've not put a massive number of miles on trikes, preferring the asymmetrical lunacy of the sidecar outfit. I did put some serious miles on the competent but occasionally compromised Tri-Glide, though, and I've got to say that both have changed my perceptions of trikes. ➔





The original solo





The Harley demonstrated that they are viable options for a rider looking for a heavyweight tourer that they don't need to balance, but the Rewaco showed that they can be developed much further than the Lehmann-based Tri-Glide with its live axle and electric reverse. It's something that Hank pitched to me when I talked to him about Trike Design's Brooklands model, and the fifty miles or so on Phil's Rewaco underlined it in thick black magic marker.

It was nimble, stable, quick and made me grin like an idiot – at the time and at its

memory – despite the weather and queues of animals, in threes for some reason, eyeing up the narrowboats on the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal.

I'll leave the last word to Phil Campbell himself, who took delivery a week later, after it had been through Klicktronic's workshops to fit a paddle shift: "It's f*cking awesome. There was no way I was going to pass my bike test with my schedule, so creating this trike allows me to go blasting through the Welsh hills when I'm at home, and I can bang out a tune wherever I am! I love it!" ★

SPECIFICATION	
Donor Bike	Victory High Ball
Rewaco Model	CT 1700 V
Width	1510mm
Length	2620mm
Height	1210mm
Unladen Weight	425kg
Total Weight	680kg
Maximum Speed	165km/h (102mph)

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HYDROGRAPHICS

You will have heard about Hydrographics over the last few years – the art of floating an image on water and transferring it to an irregular shaped or three-dimensional object by dipping it in – but how does it actually work?

Words & photography: Andy Hornsby

Id never given it a lot of thought, if I'm honest, but when I got a call from Heather from the West London Harley Riders, explaining that she was getting the sheet metal for her Sportster done by Andy and Steve at AC Custom Coatings, and would I like to see how it's done, I couldn't resist the opportunity to learn something.

It all looks simple enough, but that's what Andy Corry – who has got a wealth of experience in other print and transfer processes – thought when he first saw the process, but having invested in a small tank and a selection of hydrographic films, he was so frustrated with the early results he got that he closed the door on the operation for months. He couldn't meet his quality requirements – if it wasn't good enough for him to put on his own Harley, he couldn't ask anyone else to fit it to theirs – luckily, he is also tenacious.

In the idealised world of YouTube, you see the work of people who have been through the steep learning curve, and even then you get very little sense of how many variables are at play, all of which are just waiting to bite you on the bum.

In précis, you float a film with a printed design on the surface of a tank of water that is

at the right temperature, you spray it with an activator (Hydrovator) which starts to dissolve the carrier film leaving just the design, and you dip the part into it.

Simple! What could possibly go wrong?

Well, once you've got past the right temperature, the right amount of activator, how long to leave it for, working out how best to introduce the job to the surface of the water and account for water displacement, not a lot really

... apart from lining everything up correctly and applying an image from a flat surface to the sort of complicated compound curve that you'll find on a fuel tank, or something even more irregular.

Thankfully there are tricks that make some of those easier, but most of them come down to asking the right questions in the right way of the right people, and being unwilling to give up.

Like all paint jobs, a lot of the work is in the planning and the preparation. ➔



PLANNING I

It is possible to dip a whole fuel tank with one clean application, but you will be making life hard on yourself, particularly with films that have tight, regular patterns because the longer it takes to fully dip the part, the more chance the image has got to distort.

The clever solution is to design the finished

scheme with panels or running to a central stripe – as is the case here – which can look a lot more effective than a single pattern across the whole piece.

There's no shortage of ideas for panels, which could be existing or classic two-tone schemes, or creating your own shapes, and the rest of the

job could be finished in a second film or even be left in paint.

And, of course, the colour of the base paint is important, even when the design is pretty opaque – as it is with the gold-coloured carbon fibre – whilst the film used for the central section of Heather's tank is intended to sit on the base colour.

PREPARATION



Regardless of the age or condition of the incoming parts, the first thing Andy does is to take them back to bare metal, which reveals any blemishes on the metal itself and makes sure that there are no residual problems with the chemistry of the paint.



Any blemishes are sorted out with a filler primer, and then an etch primer is applied to give the best key for the base coat.

In this example, the whole tank was blown over in white before the main attention was paid to building up the central stripe to get plenty of depth to white, and then that was masked off to create the final band.



Once dry, the central section could then be masked and the sides given a final base coat in black.

PLANNING II



Splitting the two sides of the tank makes dipping easier, but it means you need to make sure that the weave is going the right way on both halves: not as easy as you'd think, so Andy uses a couple of strips of masking tape on the masked centre as a reference.



And when you're working with bigger graphics – like the 'Insanity' film used in the centre – you could take a chance on where the skulls appeared on the stripe, but it will always look better if you can pick out a likely candidate for the focal point. All you've got to do then is work out how to see it when it's floating in a tank of water and you've lowered the tank down on top of it, which hides it from view. A couple of index marks – on a part of the film that will transfer to a masked area – helps enormously. ➔

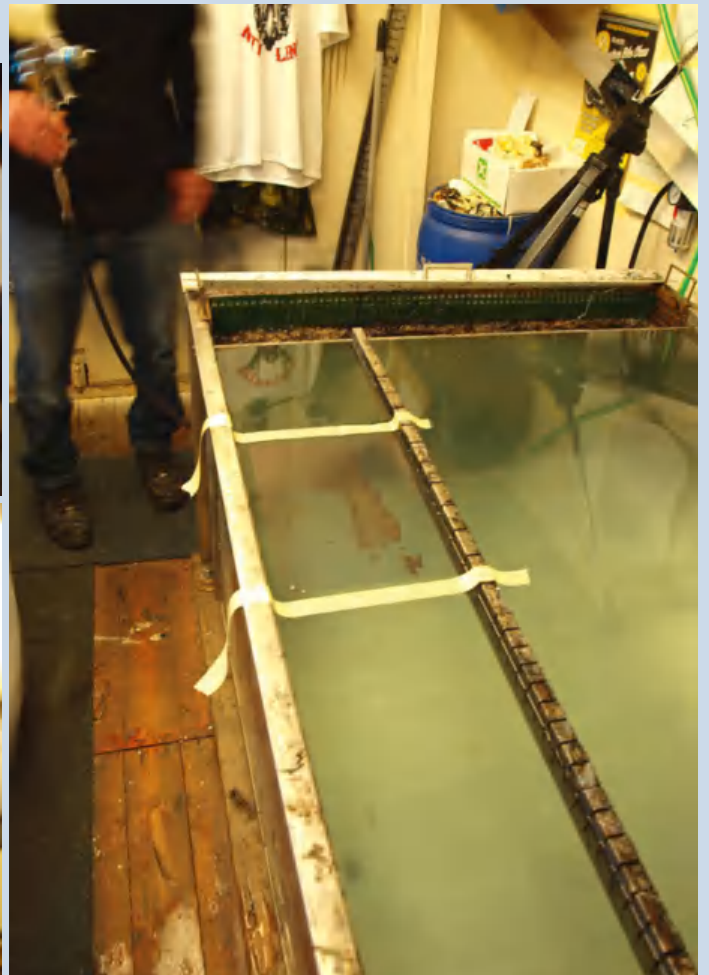
ONE-OFFS



While the selection of films is huge, if you want something very specific that is made possible by a printing process using Hydrographic inks and special films that come as A4 and A3 sheets as well as on rolls for bigger jobs, which Andy demonstrated using a photograph of rust beneath stained and peeling paint which he then applied to a smooth, white painted wooden gun stock.

It was so effective that I was briefly impressed by how well the image had adhered to the texture of the wood ... and then I realised that the texture was actually a part of the print.

The process is slightly different with smaller sheets, because there is less spare film around the job, so masking tape is used at either side rather than the rigid dams constraining the



activated image floating on the water. The tape doesn't cause problems if the job makes contact with it, and the tape can be pushed into the tank with it if necessary.

It opens up a whole host of opportunities, from distressed paint effects to logos, on tank panels or oil tanks, phone covers or helmets (stripped of their internals, for obvious reasons).

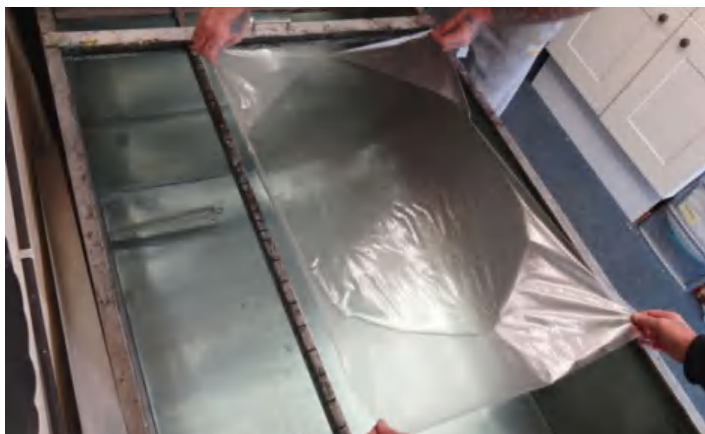
DOING THE JOB



With the tank of water ready at 28° – 32°, everything masked that needs to be masked and a plan for how you're going to introduce the part to the film – which dictates which way round the film needs to be placed on the water – you're about ready to start. So, you double-check that the film is the right way round and 'sticky side down', make sure that the surface of the water is clear, the part has been wiped over with a tack rag to remove anything that might stop the ink adhering, and prep the dipping tank.



The tank is much bigger than most of the parts that will be dipped, so it's shuttered down with moveable dams to the size of the film that will be used using a clever slotted system.



It takes two people to lay the film down clean on top of the water, and even then there's still a chance that an air bubble could be caught beneath that needs to be dealt with before the next stage.



At this point the film is clearly visible – and slightly rippled – and the water attacks the underside of the film, rendering it jelly-like, which will take about a minute. Everything is timed now and there's no going back ... well, not for the film.



With 45 seconds on the timer, the top of the film is sprayed at low pressure with an activator, which dissolves the top layer over the next 30-40 seconds, leaving just the ink floating on the water, which now looks more like glass.



You've then got a small window of time to dip the part before the ink starts to disperse – and it will – so with a confident, smooth action the part is presented at about 45° to the surface and rolled into the tank, and forwards into the ink, while an assistant with a board effectively pushes the ink in from the side to keep the pattern tight.



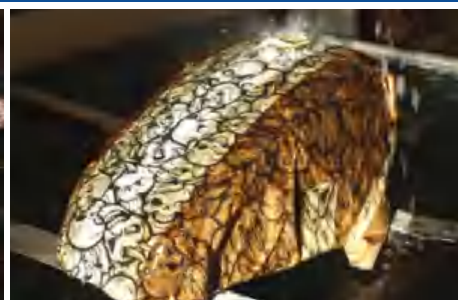
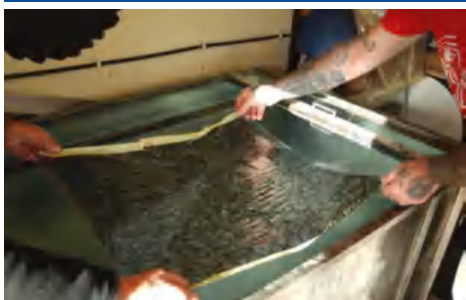
It needs to be a confident and smooth action because Archimedes is on hand to stick his oar in: immersing a sealed fuel tank into water displaces the water, the level rises and the shuttering's clever slots provide a series of small channels that the displaced water can escape through, taking the ink with it and distorting the pattern. If that happens, you don't shout Eureka! You sluice it and start again.



As soon as the job is submerged it can be pulled back out of the tank, and apart from rinsing off a layer of gelatinous residue from what was the underside of the film, now forming a slimy coating on top, that part of the operation is done. No final positioning: the ink has keyed to the base coat and the only way to correct it is to start again with a new basecoat.



Once dry, the finished side can be masked off – the masking from the other side had already been removed before rinsing it – it's wiped over with a tack rag and you're ready to do it all over again.



With each successive layer, the stakes are raised: get one layer wrong and the worst-case scenario is that you take the whole lot back to a new base coat and start again – you might get away with one panel on a simpler scheme – and it's easy to understand why it took tenacity to go back into the dipping room after the frustration of early experimentation.



The finished job is then blown over with 5 coats of lacquer, starting with a light ghost to provide a decent key, each successive coat being increasingly thicker, and the final job left to harden in a drying room overnight. And after a final inspection, it's flatted down with 2000/3000 grit and polished to within an inch of its life.

Big thanks to Andy and Steve of AC Custom Coatings (accustomcoatings.co.uk) for their help in putting this together.



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VICTORY VEGAS 8-BALL

While Victory celebrated their 15th Anniversary recently, it was the 2003 model year that brought us the platform that Polaris' first motorcycle brand was really built on.

Words & Photography: Andy Hornsby





It's not that the V92C Cruiser and V92SC Sport Cruiser weren't capable bikes – or the TC in touring trim, which we didn't officially get over here – but they were big and chunky in a Fat Boy way but without the classic Harley looks, so that was a battle they were never going to win.

So they completely redesigned the rolling chassis, fitted their 50-degree air/oil cooled 1507cc V92 engine with its 5-speed gearbox – which had seen a couple of evolutions and been christened 'Freedom' along the way – and launched the Vegas.

It was a revelation: low, lean, long and sculpted.

It was a West Coast custom complete with scalloped and stretched fuel tank into which the two-piece seat dovetailed beautifully, wrap-round front mudguard sitting tight over a skinny Dunlop, a raised rib running from nose to tail through both mudguards, and a fat – for 2003 – 170/60-section rear tyre on an 18-inch rim! It had Brembo calipers – 4-pot front, 2-pot rear – both on floating rotors and a beautiful LED taillight as standard: it was the future.

It originally came in silver with a silver frame and silver powder-coated motor with chrome covers but they soon switched to black and chrome, and it was obvious that they'd

made the most of a collaboration with the first family of Custom: it had Ness' influence stamped all over it.

Twelve years, two engine capacity increases, a sixth gear, two changes in wheels and one headlamp later, the Vegas is instantly recognisable and no less impressive in its specification, the most impressive part of which is its price.

This 2015 bike will have been ticketed at £8,995, representing exceptional value in American motorcycles, and even though the 2016 range is hitting showroom floors now with new wheels, the cast aluminium round headlamp that was introduced on the Judge and



a £9,499 price tag, it is still a massive amount of motorcycle for the money.

More than Big Twin power at less than 1200cc Sportster money we should be tripping over them everywhere, but whilst Victory owners are fast gaining a reputation for their commitment to the brand, Victory itself has struggled to break into the conservative world of motorcycling, with too many pundits suggesting that Polaris would soon get bored with motorbikes and find something else to spend its money on.

But that was before they relaunched Indian.

They are now being taken more seriously, especially by people moving toward cruisers

from other sectors: people who want more familiar engine technology than they feel they will get from Harley-Davidson.

And that technology?

A strong, well-proven, long-stroke, 1731cc OHC motor breathing through dual 45mm downdraft throttle bodies, a gear driven primary, 6-speed gearbox and belt final drive, all wrapped up in a tubular steel chassis that manages to combine decent cornering clearance with a seat height marginally more than 25-inches.

It pulled well enough from no revs in its 1507cc guise with peak torque at 3k of 90ftlb and spinning-up readily to a little over 80hp – troubling its skinny front tyre if pressed hard – and the current 97hp/113ftlb 106-inch 6-speed keeps it lively with a power characteristic that is revvier than you might expect, especially if you've just switched from an Indian Dark Horse.

Sit at seventy in any of the top three gears and the motor is happy, but if you need to get out of someone's way in a hurry, you'll gain speed from 2400rpm in overdrive sixth, accelerate in fifth from 3200rpm and catapult forward from 3600rpm in fourth!

The bigger engine feels a little lumpier than its predecessor, as the balance shaft – running off a contra-rotating intermediate gear in the primary drive that keeps everything spinning the right way – seems to let more engine

feedback through, although it might be that you're working it harder in higher revs. It feels more eager: more raw.

That's not a bad thing because it makes the bike more engaging, and because whilst the riding position with the pulled-back bars on their pullback risers is on the passive side of neutral, as befits a cruiser, put dragbars onto a pair of proper pullbacks – or the Hammer Vee Drag Bars – and you've got a bike with some attitude. Unfortunately, that will introduce you to the model's Achilles heel for serious performance ... and indeed the reason why the Hammer exists.

If you fancy a bigger footprint on that front tyre, you need to be prepared to rethink the front mudguard because it's a very snug fit and gets tighter still at the internal brace where it mounts. Even some taller 90/90 tyres can catch that brace and you haven't got a prayer of sneaking a 120/70 in there, but don't worry too much: the Jackpot used the same front end with a 250-section rear without a problem, just don't take the mickey in wet weather.

The rear tyre size went up to a 180/55x18 within a year of the launch and has stayed there ever since, while its swept 5-spoke italic wheels – the most elegantly simple – have been a feature of the steel framed bikes for the last five years. That is shorthand for saying there is a matching 8.5x18-inch (Hammer) rear and a 3.5x18-inch (Hammer/Jackpot) front – available →



in the same pattern although both will need some work to fit them.

Having spent far too much of the last twelve months riding baggers, it was good to get back to a Victory street bike because they are quite different to the company's aluminium framed Cross-series, trading the tourers' stiffer frame and improved cornering clearance for a significant 55kg weight reduction.

If it sounds odd, streetbikes having less clearance in the bends than a heavyweight tourer, it's equally true of the Harley range and does make sense when you consider the roles: room for two and comfortable on the long haul, or low slung and sexy?

The same holds for the suspension, which needs frequent optimising on a tourer with changing loads, but is a set-and-forget thing on a cruiser – especially one with a solo seat. That's fortunate really as there is no adjustment in the forks beyond fitting stiffer springs and playing with oil viscosity, and whilst the preload on the rising rate mono-shock suspension is adjustable, you need to start by removing the fusebox so will need a 10mm spanner before you can access the adjuster and its locknut, for which you will need a 'PV-43507 Preload Wrench'.

Being the 8-Ball, this Vegas is seriously blacked out: engine covers, exhausts, handlebars, fork yokes, both halves of the headlamp, filler cap, the dummy rear mudguard strut and the swing-arm. Victory stopped short of fully blacking out the wheels

– which was too much when they tried it on a previous generation's split 3-spokes – and the resulting bike doesn't look like a budget model so much as make a statement.

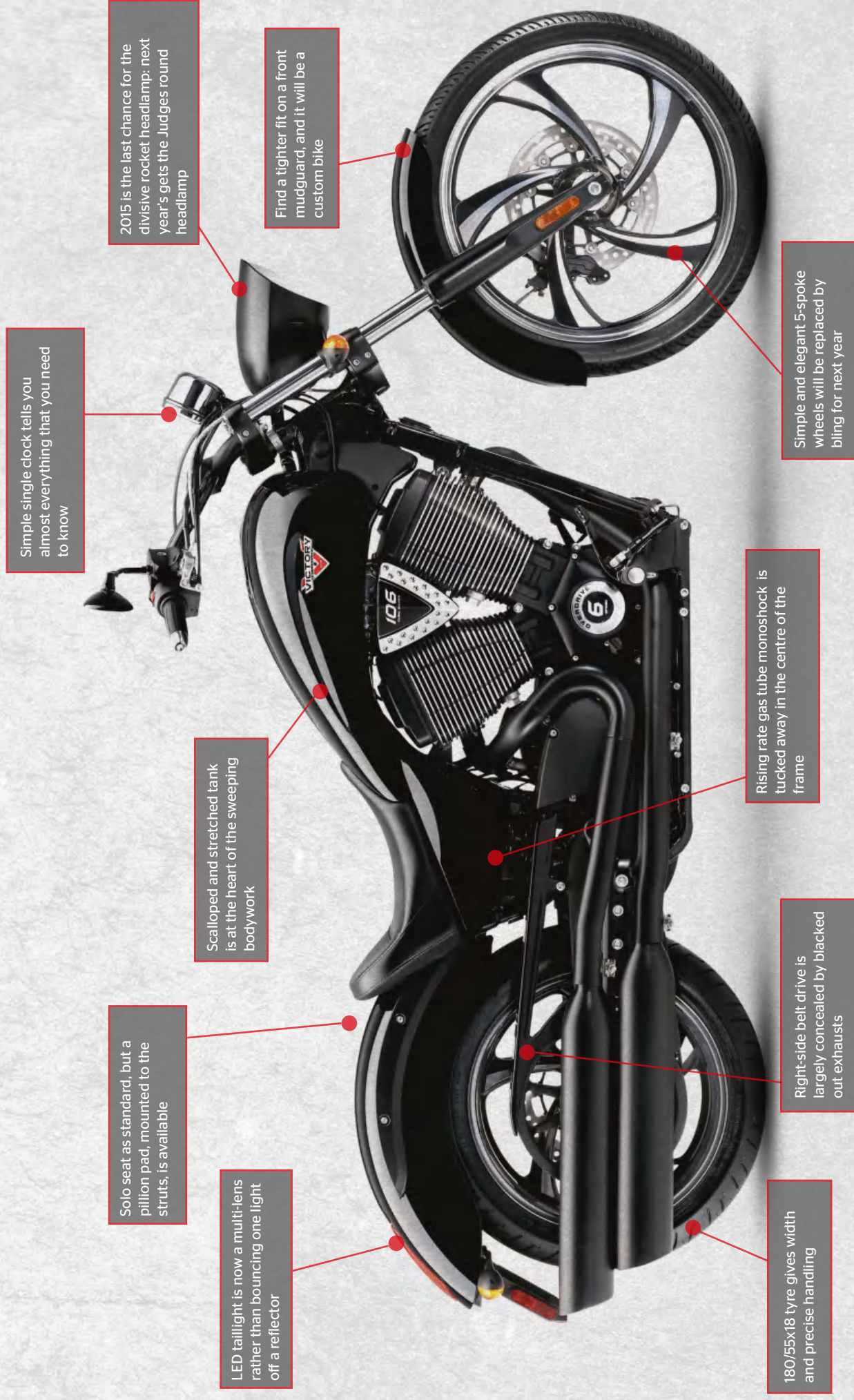
This particular version is a limited "red is the new black" edition, complementing the monochromatic finish with a subtle splash of red on the wedges at the top of the motor, the pseudo timing cover and the HT leads, and a highly visible red 'Solo Mission' seat in real leather that makes it stand out. And it's

enough. We could all nominate additional components – like the top of the headlamp shell for style or the brake calipers to allude to performance – but where would you stop?

And that's a good cue for me to stop, but not before mentioning that this is the last of this generation of Vegas with the 2016 model – as seen in the last issue under model news – getting the round headlamp and new wheels, and the aforementioned price hike. If you like this style, be quick. ★



TECH SPEC: 2015 VICTORY VEGAS 8-BALL



TECH SPEC: 2015 VICTORY VEGAS 8-BALL

DIMENSIONS

Overall Length	96.9 in (2461mm)
Overall Width	38.8 in (985mm)
Overall Height	45.9 in (1166mm)
Seat Height	25.2 in (640mm)
Wheelbase	65.1 in (1704mm)
Ground Clearance	5.3 in (135mm)
Rake/Trail	32.9° / 4.9 in (129mm)
Dry Weight	638 lbs (290kg)
Wet Weight	667 lbs (303kg)
GVWR	1151 lbs (523 kg)

ENGINE

Engine Type	Freedom 106, Air/Oil-Cooled SOHC 50° V-twin
Displacement	106 ci (1731cc)
Compression Ratio	9.4:1
Valve Train	Single overhead camshafts with 4 valves per cylinder, self-adjusting cam chains, hydraulic lifters
Bore x Stroke	101 x 108 mm
Fuel System	Closed loop Electronic Fuel Injection, dual 45mm throttle body
Exhaust	Dual staggered slash cut with common volume
Lubrication	Wet sump

DRIVE SYSTEM

Primary Drive	Gear with Torque Compensator and Wet Multi-Plate Clutch
Transmission	6-speed Constant Mesh with overdrive.
Primary Drive Ratio	1.49:1
Gear Ratios	Gearbox
1st	3.13:1
2nd	2.02:1
3rd	1.50:1
4th	1.20:1
5th	1:1
6th	0.87:1
Final Drive	Carbon Fiber Reinforced Belt
Final Drive Ratio	2.12:1

CHASSIS

Frame	Tubular steel with engine as stressed member
Front Suspension	Telescopic fork, 5.1 in (130mm) travel
Rear Suspension	Single, mono-tube gas shock wit adjustable preload and constant rate linkage, 3.0 in (75mm) travel.
Front Brakes	300mm floating rotor with 4-piston caliper
Rear Brakes	300mm floating rotor with 2-piston caliper
Front Wheel	21 x 2.15" cast aluminium 5-spoke
Rear Wheel	18 x 5.8" cast aluminium 5-spoke
Front Tyre	90/90-21 Dunlop Elite 3
Rear Tyre	180/55B18 Dunlop D417

CAPACITIES

Fuel	4.5 US Gal (17 l)
Fuel Reserve	0.8 US Gal (3.0 l)
Engine Oil	5.0 quarts (4.75 l)

ELECTRICAL

Alternator	48A max output
Battery	12 volt, 18 amp/hour, 310 CCA
Headlight	2 x H11 halogens: one dip, one main.
Tail/Brake Light	Non-Serviceable LED
Turn Signal	R10W
License Plate	Non-Serviceable LED
Speedometer	Non-Serviceable LED
Indicator Lights	Non-Serviceable LED
Instruments	Electronic speedometer - user configurable for mph or km/h - with Multi-Function Display (MFD) showing, odometer, trip, tach, gear indicator, clock. Optional upgrade adds second trip, average fuel economy, instant fuel economy, trip hours, average speed, EC Voltage, ambient air temperature. Indicator lights for neutral, high beam, turn signals, low fuel, check engine.

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Black - test bike equipped with optional colour pack

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THUNDERBIKES ARE GO

Here's one for you: do Germans get déjà vu? I certainly did when these dropped through my eLetterbox, recognising the background, the forks, the wheels and even the colour.

Words: Andy Hornsby **Photography:** Thunderbike

Indeed, I went back and checked the original email, with a nagging feeling at the back of my mind that I was expecting a Fat Bob, but I wasn't ... I wonder where that's coming from?

No, this is – or rather was – a Harley-Davidson Breakout that even its mother wouldn't recognise, and whilst we have seen many of the parts that have gone to make up the whole, they weren't all on the same bike. It shouldn't come as any real surprise because authorised

Harley-Davidson dealer Thunderbike's mission has long been to create a range of parts that can be mixed and matched according to your tastes, and this is the proof of that particular strudel.

It also demonstrates that it is a repeatable process: nothing here is more than a chequebook away, and doesn't even need to upset the TÜV folk because, apart from losing the horns that hold the mudguard struts on, which doesn't affect its structure, the frame is a cleaned up stock Softail. ➔





There are a few very simple rules of thumb for the components of this bike: it's either unmodified Harley-Davidson give or take a paint finish, a Thunderbike part, a Vance & Hines exhaust or a motogadget speedo. Or it's a Metzeler tyre.

It's a production model they've taken as far as they can, short of making frames and engines, and why would they want to do that when they've got Harley-Davidson? They could strip a Breakout – no, the forks aren't going begging, I've asked – and turn it into something like this, safe in the knowledge that it will work ... well, obviously not exactly like this, because what would be the point?

Follow every system – take the front brakes as an example – and the attention to detail is staggering, especially as it is effectively production engineering. It's easy to get distracted by the big pieces, like the spectacular 'Monoblocks' wheels that were designed for 'Unbreakable', but look beyond: let it unfold. And, in fact, remark upon just how good that cast aluminium oil tank looks, finished to match the rest of the bike!

It obviously doesn't come cheap – CNC-machined billet is never going to be mass market at this end of the spectrum – but that it is available at all, and that it has come from so highly regulated a country and meets all requirements has got to be good news for the custom industry.

Right, where can I get a CNC milling machine from? ★





SPECIFICATION

Bike Name:	Thunderbike TB-R III	
Model	Harley-Davidson Softail Breakout	
Year	2015	
Frame	Stock	
Swingarm	Thunderbike Single-Sided	
Forks	Thunderbike Unbreakable: CNC machined with Air-Ride Suspension	
Rear Suspension	Thunderbike Air-Ride	
Fender	Thunderbike TB-R	
Fuel Tank	Thunderbike TB-R	
Exhaust	Vance & Hines Short Shots	
Air Cleaner	Thunderbike Unbreakable	
Forward Controls	Thunderbike Base Alu	
Grips	Thunderbike Base Alu	
Wheels	<i>Front</i>	3.75x26" Thunderbike Unbreakable Monoblock
	<i>Rear</i>	9.0x21" Thunderbike Unbreakable Monoblock
Brakes	Thunderbike with rear Pulley-Brake Kit	
Engine Covers	Thunderbike	
Headlamp	Thunderbike Unbreakable	
Turn Signals	<i>Front</i>	Thunderbike Unbreakable, integrated into fork
	<i>Rear</i>	Thunderbike Pan Head
Tyres	<i>Front</i>	Metzeler 120/55 R26 Marathon Ultra
	<i>Rear</i>	Metzeler 260/35 VR21 Marathon Ultra
Speedo	Motogadget Motoscope Mini	
Paint	Ingo Kruse	

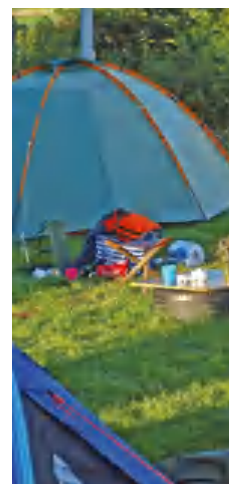


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SHIPLEY RALLY 2015

No event for Harley riders in the UK has more resonance than the ill-named Shipley rally, which is actually staged in the smaller neighbouring town of Baildon on the edge of the Yorkshire Dales.

Words & Photography: Andy Hornsby





Rightly famous for being the first and longest surviving, it was originally held at Dobrudden Farm in August of 1976 when a group of Harley-riding friends from across the country met up for a Bank Holiday weekend on the moor, and it snowballed from there. It became a proper rally in 1979, was adopted by the Harley-Davidson Riders' Club in 1980, forming a major event in their calendar right through to 2001, when pressure from some of the southern regions took what was, by then, their National Rally down to Berkshire for a year.

The Wrecking Crew HDC kept the Baildon Moor fires burning in 2002 and the Riders' Club returned in Harley-Davidson's anniversary year – moving the event down into the town of Baildon, which had always welcomed the strays, as indeed the rally has welcomed the locals – but it would be their last visit.

Their departure also presented Shipley's biggest challenge to date, because they continued to hold their National Rally on August Bank Holiday weekend, testing the loyalties of many – to follow tradition or to support their club – and which did lead to some harsh words.

It faced another challenge too, which was that the Wrecking Crew already had their own event and didn't want to take it on permanently, but three local Harley riders were unwilling to let it go and the 2004 event, hosted at its current site – Baildon RUFC – was staged by the newly formed Shipley Harley-Davidson Club.

And it didn't just survive, it flourished, drawing a decent crowd despite being on the most popular weekend of the summer – including a strong European contingent – to the extent that the old focal point in town, the

Malt Shovel with its impromptu stage, can no longer cope with the numbers, and every café and bar in Baildon now welcomes all comers. At least they do until the campers drift back up the hill to the marquee on site, club bar, more bands and a late licence, and eventually a shorter crawl to bed.

Despite being almost forty years since that first August Bank Holiday, the Shipley Rally has done better than most in keeping much of its old school charm while accommodating those who are looking for something a little bit more sophisticated – evident in the range of bikes that come back year after year – but even its longevity can't protect it from the next series of challenges.

The most notable of these is a less accommodating attitude from the local police, relating to the well-run and massive charity ride-out – they are no longer prepared to sanction marshals closing roads, which lead to the fragmentation of participants this year and is something that could affect any decent-sized run if we're not careful – but they have overcome bigger hurdles in the past.

Perhaps more disappointingly, despite the Riders' Club having foregone their fixed August Bank Holiday National Rally in favour of sharing the honours between the bigger regional events, Shipley hasn't managed to pull back those who turned their backs on the rally over ten years ago, which is a shame ... but then with 2016 being the fortieth anniversary of that first humble gathering at Dobrudden Farm, there's always hope.

It's only a pity it's just a fortnight from the Rider's Club's next National at nearby Northallerton – which is easier to write than to say – but at least it doesn't clash. ★



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All of the full forks are a Universal fitment whereas the cartridge kits shown are only available for the FLH/FLT range.

The new for 2015 Blackline STX36 shocks are available for most of the Harley range, both Blackline and the standard range. In the famous Öhlins gold are available in various lengths and styles with or without external adjustments as well as having a wide range of springs available to suit all riders needs and requirements.

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AIN'T NO MOUNTAIN HIGH ENOUGH

So, the water-cooled Scout is too modern?
Not sexy enough? Not a real Indian? Yeah, whatever.

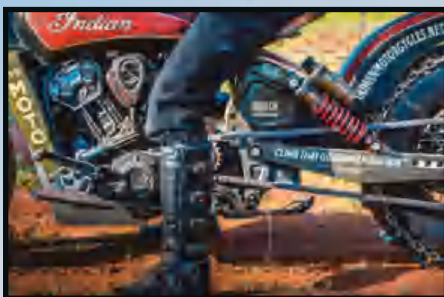
Words: Andy Hornsby **Photography:** Todd Williams/
Indian Motorcycle



It's ridiculously easy to dismiss new bikes, especially from well-established marques where people have got such a strong sense of what bikes bearing that logo should be. Just ask Harley-Davidson, who have been through it with every evolution of their big twin from the Panhead on, if not earlier: "A V-twin? What was wrong with the single!?"

Indian, of course, have escaped that for the last sixty years – well, apart from derisory snorts when the Warbonnet appeared on sides of things from Royal Enfield Constellations to two-stroke mini-bikes – but the new custodians of the brand are doing their utmost to win round the traditionalists.

The weirdest thing that I'm finding, however, is that while the fully-skirted heavyweight Chiefs have captured a lot of the heritage of the last bikes out of Springfield, it is the all-new liquid-cooled Scout that is generating the interest.



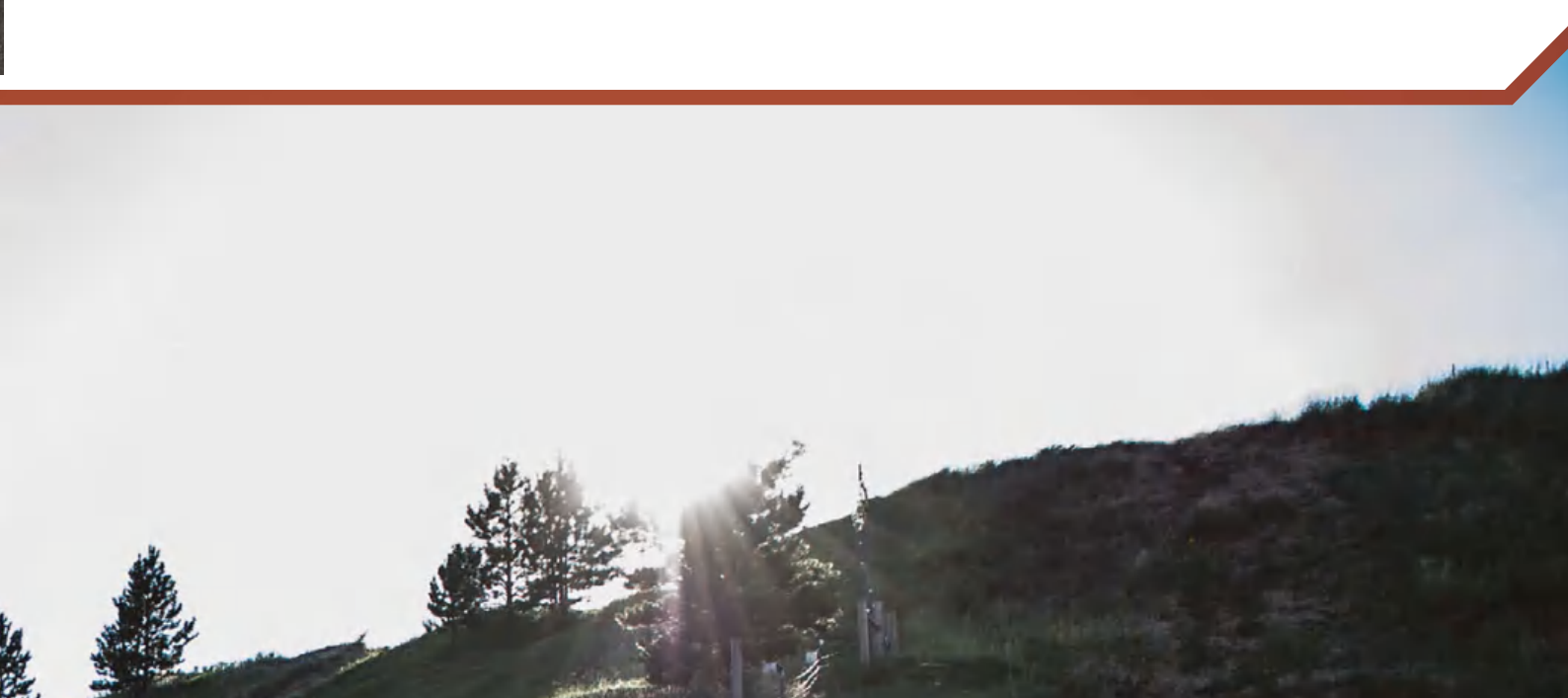
And this will certainly generate some! Motorcycle porn: down and dirty, raw and raucous.

One of the bikes in Indian's Custom Scout Series, designed to show the potential within the bike, The 'Black Hills Beast' was built by Don Siddins and Nick Jaquez from Indianmotorcycles.net in time for Sturgis, after a request from Indian to "build us a hill climber".

"Building this bike was sort of easy and sort of a challenge," says Doug Siddins. "Enthusiasts know what a hill climber looks like, so some of the mods were logical, but scaling them to fit the new Scout was the key and took a lot of work. We are proud of the overall effect and know that the bike was a hit in Sturgis for its important 75th anniversary."

I presume that everyone reading this knows that we're not talking about the sort of hill climber that takes on the hills at Goodwood and Prescott here – or even Pikes Peak: these are the bikes that lunatics with cojones the size of spacehoppers throw at mountains more in hope than expectation. They frequently do these days, in fairness, but that's because the bikes have been adapted: the tyres provide more traction and the engines are more powerful, but it's still a place where your success can be measured by how far you got before you laid the bike down or flipped it. ➔







There's plenty of footage online – the archive stuff from Modesto and Idaho in the fifties is fun and has a better soundtrack than the silent 1930s stuff or the incessant and too successful two-strokes more recently – or revisit the Widowmaker in Utah, a little more than an hour into On Any Sunday.

"We settled in on the design quickly," explains Nick Jaquez. "But none of it would have worked out without the assistance of our suppliers and partners in this build. We cranked on it for a month and tossed out a few bits along the way. I do feel like we delivered one cool machine and it was a blast getting it dirty, too."

Don and Nick transformed the standard Scout into the 'Black Hills Beast' by fitting a one-off BTR Moto extended swing-arm and a Zippers chain drive conversion to give more control over

the gearing and because I'm not sure you can get Kevlar belts that long! A pair of Fox shocks – longer than stock – lift the back end up for the necessary clearance on the dirt, matched up to Traxxion Dynamics-modified forks, for a firmer ride, and you can never have enough grip so seriously chunky tyres were added, fitted with chains for even more.

Next up was a set of custom handlebars to make sure the rider can get their weight as far over the front wheel as possible – to keep the front wheel down when that rear wheel is pushing hard – and then a minimal RPW USA custom exhaust: partly for power, aided by Dobeck Performance, and partly because if it's tucked in, it stands less chance of getting badly damaged when sliding back down the hill on its side ... but I'm sure they won't want to think

much about that. And Aeromach supplied a pair of floorboards and a heel shifter – it's a lot easier, and probably safer, to stamp down with the heel of a robust boot than snick the front up.

From Indian's own cupboard, a pair of laced wheels were pressed into service, just because they look great, and the 1920 Solo Saddle looks like it was made for the bike – helped massively by the distressed competition-inspired paint/powdercoating by Starr Studios and Rocochet Customs: it looks like it has been up a few hills already ... and back down, and there are plans to see how it performs in anger, which explains the extra level of protection ahead of the radiator.

So no, not a proper Indian at all, or in the least bit sexy ... but then again? ★



BRIGHTONA 2015

Words & Photography: Andy Hornsby



It's a bloody long way to go for a one-day event but you can't begrudge an excellent cause, and there is nothing quite like the event in aid of the Sussex Heart Charity that takes over Madeira Drive – and increasingly the surrounding area: a veritable carnival of all things motorcycle.

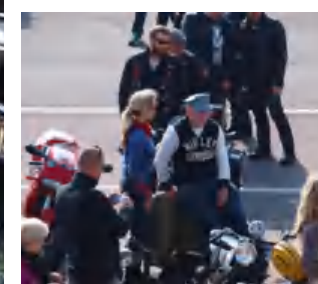
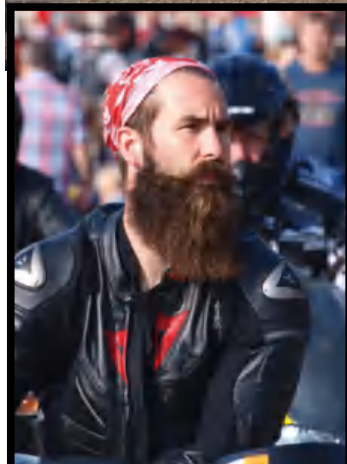
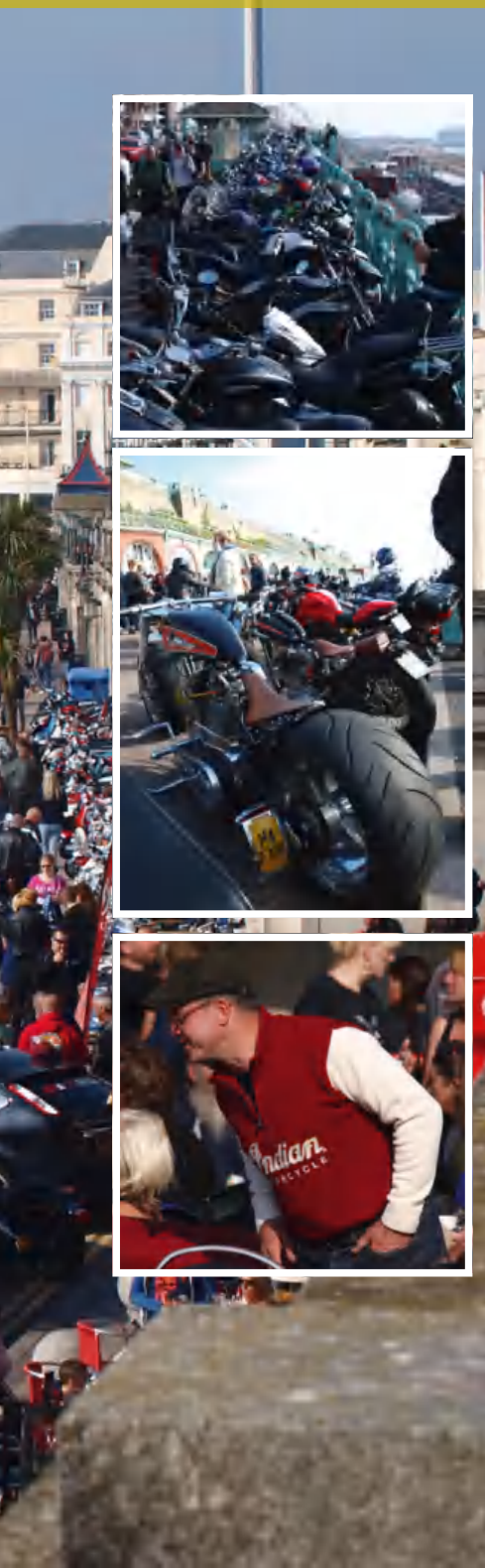
It is quite literally impossible to see everything that is going on because even if you arrive when the traders are setting up in the small hours of the morning and are the last to leave, you'll never keep up with the constant procession of bikes arriving and leaving, and will

struggle to get round all the traders, never mind the custom show organised by Janine and Peter of Harrison Billet, and necessities like eating.

It bears testament to what can be achieved when campaigners and a local authority can work together for the common good, and, of course, Brighton has long had an excellent reputation for hosting major motoring events, including the UK's forerunner to the SuperRally.

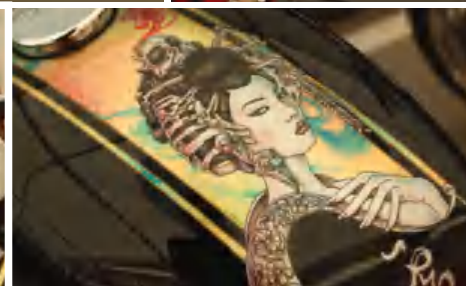
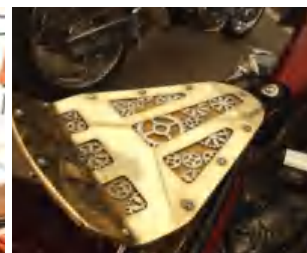
My main point of focus was the custom show, which always attracts an interesting selection of bikes and is increasingly seen as a precursor to the ➔





Category (sponsored by)	WINNER	RUNNER UP
BEST HARLEY (Krazy Horse Customs)	Ian Cushing, Second City Customs	Andrew Kirby
BEST CUSTOM (Harrison Billet)	Lin Jefford, Destiny Cycles	Shaun Barley, Barley Customs
BEST STREETFIGHTER (Streetfighter Magazine)	Alex Lonsdale	Joe de Cruz
BEST SCOOTER (Skin Candy of Brighton)	Shaun Barley, Barley Customs	Lee Maxey
BEST CHOPPER (Back Street Heroes)	Shaun Barley, Barley Customs	Ian Cushing, Second City Customs
BEST TRIKE (Trike Magazine)	Anthony White	Brian Charge
BEST RAT (Abbey Precision Engineering Ltd, Kent)	Dylan Percy	Adam Rabbit
BEST PAINT (London & Brighton Plating)	Circus of Speed, Lamb Engineering	Zero, Krazy Horse Customs London
BEST CLASSIC (Classic Motorcycle & Mechanic Magazine)	John Goldsmith	Tom Simpson, Foundry Motorcycles, Chichester
BEST IN SHOW (Sussex Heart Charity and Brightona Charity Riders)	Shaun Barley, Barley Customs	Lin Jefford, Destiny Cycles

CUSTOM SHOW WINNERS



ExCeL London Bike Show's custom section, having been invited to join the judging panel, but there's plenty more to see and do.

I walked my legs off, up and down the full length of Madeira Drive, struggling through bigger crowds than I've seen there before – particularly when they became concentrated round the many stages hosting a selection of live music – and even the promenade above! It certainly draws a crowd.

After that, a brew at the Sussex Coasters tent was very welcome, and it was good to see Trike Design, Krazy Horse and The Foundry supporting the event, but I was surprised not to see Shaw Harley-Davidson in their usual spot – or indeed any Harley representation anywhere – especially with the still-new Street 750 ideally placed to grab a lot of attention from a very wide audience, but then you can't be everywhere.

Hats off to Abby Goldin and the Brightona Charity Riders: you make a difference! ★

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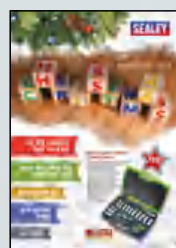


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DECEMBER 2015

12-13

Kickback Chelsea

The latest diary date from a series of shows that is focusing on taking custom motorcycles in all their diversity to venues across the country. Little more than a stone's throw from Warr's Harley-Davidson, in the Great Hall at Stamford Bridge, home of Chelsea FC.
thecustomshow.com

JANUARY 2016

22-24

Motor Bike Expo Verona, Italy

One of the big European events, with a huge custom section that qualifies as a show in itself.
motorcycleexpo.it

FEBRUARY

12-14

London Bike Show, ExCeL Docklands, London

An increasingly important show in the UK's calendar, with a competitive custom show as well as mainstream, sport and classics.
mcnmotorcycleshow.com

13-14

Dragon Rally, Somewhere in North Wales

An event for the hardy, along the same lines as the Elephant with commitment assured by not knowing where it's being held until you pick up your ticket.
conwymotorcycleclub.co.uk

MARCH

4-13

Daytona Bike Week, Daytona Beach, Florida

More than a week, but then it's more than your average event: everyone needs to go at least once, because there is so much more going on, and places to go, than we can ever do justice to.
officialbikeweek.com

27-28

Red Marley Hill Climb Great Witley, Worcestershire

Classic hill climb event – pre-1970. Free entrance on Sunday, £8 on Monday.
redmarleyhillclimb.com

APRIL

2-3

Manchester Bike Show Event City, Manchester

Now in its fifth year, and growing into the biggest indoor bike show in the North of England.
manchesterbikeshow.com

22-24

HDRCGB Region 7 Rally Llandovery

New home for this Riders' Club regional rally.
harley-davidson-hangout.com

23-24

36th Carole Nash Classic Bike Show Stafford Showground

Long established and a known quantity.
classicbikeshows.com

28 April - 1 May

Euro Festival, Port Grimaud Golfe de St Tropez

Excellent early run to the sun: a former European HOG Rally that couldn't bring itself to leave, and still operated by Harley-Davidson.
harley-davidson.com

MAY

12-15

Super Rally Alcañiz, Spain

H-DC Aragon hosts the FH-DCE's 2016 International in Northern Spain.
superrally2016h-dcaragon.com

20-22

HDRCGB Naseby Field Market Harborough.

Riders' club regional rally.
harley-davidson-hangout.com

26-30

Caledonia Harley Club, Wallace Rally Sterling, Scotland

Ever popular, over-subscribed rally: Harley-Davidsons only except by CHC invite.
caledoniahc.com



JUNE

3-6

Ireland Bikefest Killarney

A one-time European HOG Rally that stuck, that gives you a good excuse to visit the beautiful island on our doorstep.
irelandbikefest.com

8-12

Wheels and Waves Côte de l'Océan, Biarritz

Stylish rally featuring bikes, surf, music and art on France's Atlantic coast, gaining popularity and the venue for Harley's King of Custom EMEA Final.
wheels-and-waves.com

10-12

HDRCGB Riverside Rally Edge of Dartmoor, Devon.

Riders' Club regional rally: formerly the River Dart Rally: a chance to get some miles in and worth it.
harley-davidson-hangout.com

16-19

25th European HOG Rally Portorož, Slovenia

HOG is heading for a Slovenian beach for their big event in 2016.
hogeuropegallery.com

17-19

HDRCGB New Forest Rally Eastleigh

Riders' Club regional rally.
harley-davidson-hangout.com

17-19

H-DC Wales Summer Rally Usk

Friendly, inclusive rally in South Wales.
h-dcw.com

JULY

1-4

HDRCGB Lake Rally Kirkby Lonsdale

Riders' Club regional rally that takes over the town.
harley-davidson-hangout.com

10-12

HDRCGB Vintage & Sportster Rally Lydbury, North.

Riders' Club regional rally: formerly the River Dart Rally: a chance to get some miles in and worth it.
harley-davidson-hangout.com

29-31

Burnin' Budgie Beaconsfield

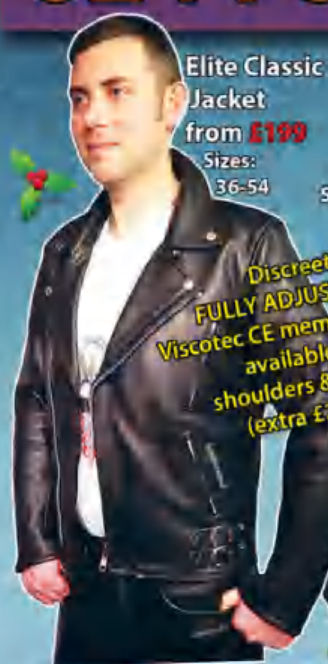
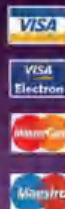
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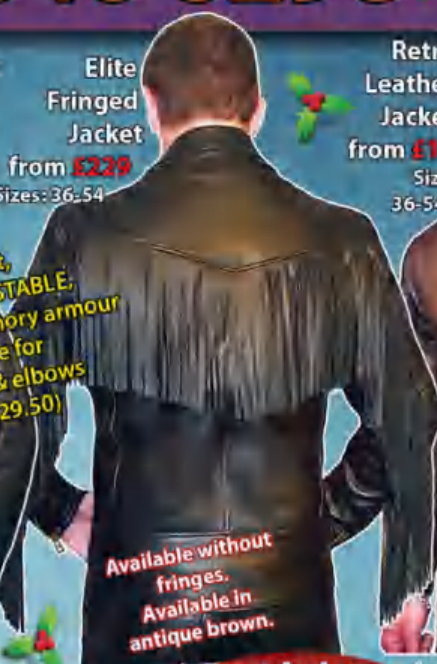
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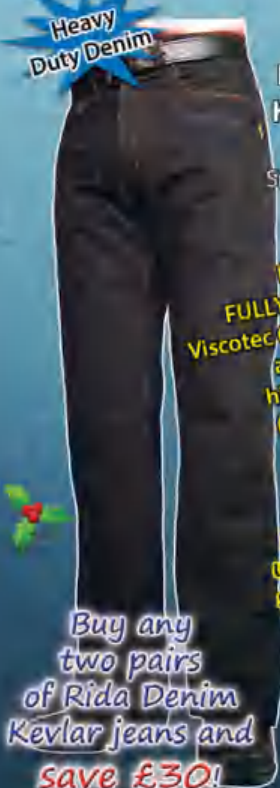
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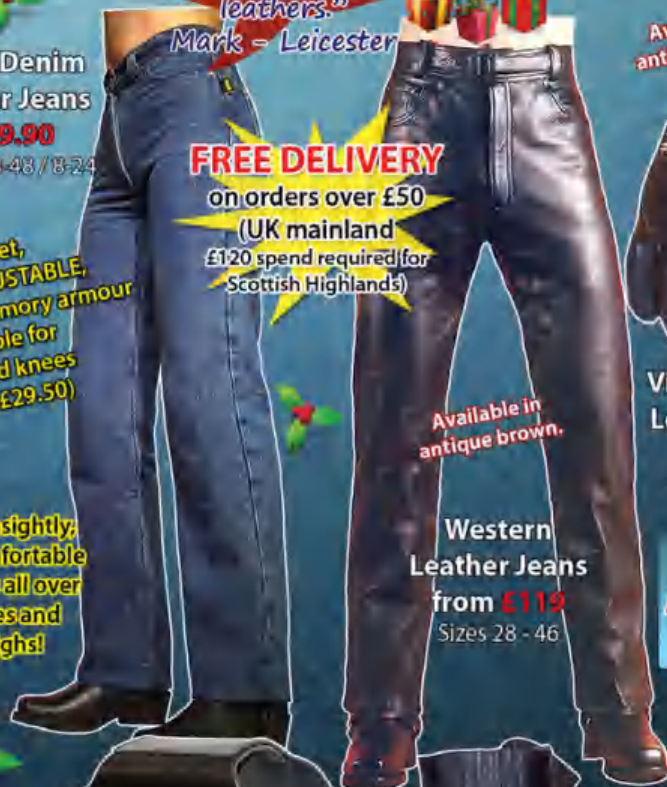
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THE LAST WORD

If things were different in Springfield in 1953 we might be more familiar with Sam Pierce's name. As it is, we only have his interview in *Cycle World*, in May 1952.

Over the course of ten years, Sam got his P61 Rocket to prototype stage by 1952 and while it looks a lot like a Chief, it doesn't quack like a Chief. He went through every engine component seeking common parts from the auto industry, like Ford rods side-by-side on a common journal in a flywheel of his own design, Mercury pistons and steel liners in Chief barrels that had been shortened by an

inch and a quarter overall, de-stroking it to give a 61-inch motor.

His high performance powertrain was mounted on Chrysler Neoprene spring shackles to a skid bolted between the lower frame rails of the chrome-moly Indian 841 frame – saving 21lbs of weight compared to a Chief's – and steadied by a Chevy motor mount, making it possibly the first rubber-mount engine in a

motorcycle. He even designed eccentric rear wheel adjusters for the plunger rear suspension!

His idea was that Indian could use it to fill the gap left by the Scout, competing with Harley's new Model-K and the British lightweights, but Indian were committed to their singles and parallel twins and had bigger problems looming, and Sam went on to build Scouts from New Old Spares as 'American Indian'. ★





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